DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 363 137 FL 021 628

AUTHOR	Ringbom, Hakan, Ed.
TITLE	Near-Native Proficiency in English.
INSTITUTION	Abo Akademi (Finland).
REPORT NO	ISBN-951-650-275-X; ISSN-1235-7227
PUB DATE	Jun 93
NOTE	309p.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - General (020)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Comparative Analysis; *English (Second Language); Foreign Countries; *Language Attitudes; *Language Fluency; *Language Proficiency; Language Role; *Language Skills; Language Usage; Native Speakers; *Writing Skills
IDENTIFIERS	Finland; New Zealand

ABSTRACT

Three articles on near-native English language proficiency are presented. "Attitudes to English Usage: A Comparison between Native and Non-Native Speakers," by Ann-Christin Miemois, reports on a study of attitudes toward usage of certain lexical items in English in four distinct situations. Subjects were natives of Finland and New Zealand. "Word Associations of Foreign Language Learners and Native Speakers: The Phenomenon of a Shift in Response Type and Its Relevance for Lexical Development," by Tove Soderman, describes research on how responses to word association tasks, for frequent and/or infrequent words, may differ for native and non-native speakers. "Characteristics of Near-Native Proficiency in Writing" by Tove Waller, describes research on the ways in which individuals with near-native proficiency in English have learned or can compensate for limited vocabulary or lack of syntactic sophistication. Introductory and concluding remarks by the editor are also included. (MSE)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

Med vänskapsfull hälsning

ED 363 137

NEAR-NATIVE PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH

edited by

Håkan Ringbom

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Håkan Ringbom

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

FL021628

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT PUBLICATIONS 2
Åbo Akademi University
Åbo 1993

2

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Assistant to the editor: Tom Björkfors

ÅBO AKADEMI
ENGELSKA INSTITUTIONEN
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
Fänriksgatan 3 A
20500 ÅBO FINLAND

With the editor's compliments

NEAR-NATIVE PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH

edited by

Håkan Ringbom

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT PUBLICATIONS 2
Åbo Akademi University
Åbo 1993

Assistant to the editor: Tom Björkfors

ISSN 1235-7227
ISBN 951-650-275-X

Åbo Akademis tryckeri
Åbo 1993

CONTENTS

Editor's preface 4

Håkan Ringbom.
Introduction: On Near-native Proficiency 5

Ann-Christin Miemois.
Attitudes to English Usage. A Comparison
between Native and Non-native Speakers 9

Tove Söderman.
Word Associations of Foreign Language Learners and
Native Speakers. The Phenomenon of a Shift in Response
Type and its Relevance for Lexical Development 91

Tove Waller.
Characteristics of Near-native
Proficiency in Writing 183

Håkan Ringbom.
Near-nativeness and the Four Language Skills:
Some Concluding Remarks 295

PREFACE

This volume is an attempt to elucidate 'near-native proficiency', a concept which has so far not attracted much attention in linguistic research. In a way it is understandable that the near-native speaker/writer has rarely been in the researcher's focus, since even the question what native proficiency is is still open. If we do not know what native proficiency is like, how can we then define what near-native proficiency is? Yet, the question what characterizes near-native proficiency seems sufficiently interesting and relevant from both a scholarly and a pedagogical point of view to merit investigation.

Near-native proficiency formed the topic of a small-scale project at the Department of English, Åbo Akademi University, in 1991-92, resulting in this volume.

The contributions by Miemois and Waller are previously unpublished theses pro gradu (M.A. theses), where very few changes in the original versions have been made. From Waller's work, however, the B texts, i.e. ten reference letters, were omitted from the appendix, since it was felt that even reference letters which are anonymous in the sense that all names are deleted are too confidential by nature to be included in a published work. The contribution by Söderman is a licentiate thesis (between M.A. and Ph.D.), where no changes have been made.

The publication of this volume and the financing of part of the research work for the three theses were made possible by grants from Stiftelsen för Åbo Akademi, the H.W. Donner Trust, for which I express my heartfelt thanks.

Åbo, June 1993

Håkan Ringbom

Introduction: On Near-native Proficiency

Although interest in research in bilingualism has grown steadily, language dominance and the measurement of bilingualism remain areas where satisfactory results have been difficult to achieve. So far no really adequate measuring instrument has been found: conventional language testing methods, at least those aiming at some kind of quantification, are of little use in attempts to determine very advanced stages of proficiency, a level which a bilingual by definition has attained.

A person regarded as bilingual is usually someone who has had extensive contact with two languages from a very early stage on, for instance in the family and/or in his usual school environment. It is often said or implied that only these early bilinguals have a chance of attaining complete bilingualism, whatever that is.

But what about late bilinguals, people who did not come in extensive contact with the other language until after puberty? Should these people, many of whom have often acquired a very wide knowledge about the language, and who may have pursued successful studies at foreign universities, automatically be disqualified from the label 'native' or 'native-like' speaker? Is it really impossible for these people to attain a truly native-like knowledge of the foreign language? Could they not compensate for their educational/pragmatic gaps in childhood and school background by having a linguistic knowledge on a par with and in some respects even surpassing that of many native speakers? And if there are differences between native and these non-native speakers, exactly what are their linguistic manifestations?

A near-native speaker of English (NNS) can preliminarily be defined as a late bilingual whose speech and/or writing, though generally error-free, yet has qualities which in native speakers (NS) frequently raise at least doubts whether it is native or non-native in origin. Near-native speakers did not have a chance of spending time in an L2-speaking environment before their late teens, but they have normally spent extended periods in an English-speaking country, often having a degree from an English-language university. Their profession also often involves some aspect of the teaching of English.

The above definition of a NNS is largely biographical and starts out from inevitable cultural/pragmatic differences between NSs and NNSs. Whether and to what extent these differences will be linguistically and processually manifested is the theme of this volume, and I shall return to the problem of a workable definition of near-nativeness in my concluding remarks.

A first step in investigating near-native speakers' language might be to try to establish whether and to what extent the near-native speaker's linguistic make-up is identical with or merely similar to that of the native speaker. Davies (1991:165), referring to several earlier investigations, states that the most difficult aspect of linguistic competence for the learner to acquire is that of judgements of grammaticality. Certainly many people, including myself, have the experience that in examination boards consisting of both native and non-native language teachers, the natives generally have a much less normative and less dogmatic approach to language than the non-native teachers. NSs are often hesitant about usage and sometimes argue heatedly against each other, paying considerable attention to the context where an utterance appears. The guiding star of non-native language teachers at school, on the other hand, too frequently tends to be the grammar book: if a pedagogical grammar states a rule, the temptation of regarding that rule as a permanent truth rather than as general advice appears to be difficult to resist.

In this volume acceptability judgements are investigated by Ann-Christin Miemois. In eliciting acceptability judgments, she distinguishes between formal written, formal spoken, informal written and informal spoken situations. In line with some earlier research , her study shows that native speakers are more lenient than NNSs for the majority of sentences. But whereas NSs adapt their judgments above all to the formality of the situation, NNSs frequently reject the test sentences in all situations.

If, then, there are differences between NSs and NNSs in acceptability judgements, does this also mean that the mental lexica of these two groups would be differently organized? This difficult problem might be elucidated by studying word associations. The question could be reformulated in a more concrete form: In response to the same stimulus words, do NNSs regularly produce the same word associations as NSs or do their responses show a different pattern? Previous word association studies have been largely confined to NSs, whereas studies of non-native speakers are few and far between. In her study Tove Söderman compares native and near-native responses to words of different frequencies. While previous research has shown that in NSs, age and proficiency seem to work together into a developmental pattern from primarily syntagmatic (*black* > *horse*) into primarily paradigmatic (*black* > *white*) responses, Söderman establishes word frequency as another significant factor for both NSs and NNSs.

The area where a NNS's non-nativeness is most easily detected is probably his accent. Nearly all late bilinguals who have acquired a native-like knowledge of L2-grammar and L2-lexis still retain some trace of a foreign accent, at least in some situations. On the other hand, we have all met or heard people, especially actors and singers, with a singular excellence in producing native-like speech in fixed situations, even though their actual knowledge of the language may be minimal, even practically non-existent.

Against this background the distinction between motor-perceptual skills and language skills proper becomes important (see Corder 1973:26f.). From a psycholinguistic point of view it seems best to regard motor-perceptual skills as secondary.

Since the four language skills pose different demands on their users we can also expect non-nativeness to appear differently in each of them. Reading and writing are skills where an extensive knowledge of L2-vocabulary is obviously needed. Since NNSs frequently possess a vocabulary considerably larger than that of many NSs, a potentially interesting problem would be to investigate how well observant NSs can distinguish between NS and NNS writing.

This is the question tackled by Tove Waller. She had native speakers (post-graduate students of language and literature at the University of Sheffield) pronounce judgments on native and near-native texts.

It appears that these experts frequently went wrong in assigning non-native texts to the native category and vice versa. Some texts written by the same NNS also elicited very different comments as to their possible non-nativeness. Thus, even highly trained native speakers have considerable problems in distinguishing native from near-native texts, and to provide a concrete characterization of 'the foreign accent in writing', to borrow a phrase by Andrew Chesterman (personal communication), is even more difficult. What some observant native speakers experience as non-nativelike frequently goes unnoticed or is viewed as an idiosyncratic native feature by others.

REFERENCES

Corder, S. P. (1973). *Introducing Applied Linguistics.* Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books.

Davies, A. (1991). *The Native Speaker in Applied Linguistics.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Ann-Christin Miemois

ATTITUDES TO ENGLISH USAGE

A comparison between native and non-native speakers

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION 11

2. AIMS AND HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY 15

3. TEST MATERIAL 17
   3.1. The questionnaire 17
   3.2. The subjects 28
   3.3. The test situation 29

4. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS 31
   4.1. General tendencies 31
   4.2. Sentences in different situations 36
      4.2.1. Spoken informal language 38
      4.2.2. Spoken formal language 41
      4.2.3. Written informal language 43
      4.2.4. Written formal language 45
   4.3. General acceptance of each sentence 47
   4.4. Summary of reactions to sentences 49

5. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS 72

6. CONCLUSION 79

BIBLIOGRAPHY 82

APPENDICES 85

testmaterial

1. INTRODUCTION

Anybody involved in English language teaching or learning must have felt frustration when given comments like: *"this is correct, but a native speaker would not use it"* or *"this is **not** correct but a native speaker would use it"*. The fact that this is a common phenomenon poses two interesting questions: 1. How do native speakers look upon their language compared to non-native speakers of the same language? 2. What linguistic knowledge separates native speakers from non-native ones?

Only a few have been interested in these matters. Linguistic research has long been focused on the learning process and the features of bilingual speakers. This information has been, and still is very essential for the development of language teaching practices. However, there is a significant need for deeper understanding of the features of native and non-native speakers in order to reach the core of language learning.

An explanation of terms is needed before the present discussion is continued. When I use *non-native* in this work I refer to the group of users of English (as a second language) who are very fluent but cannot be characterized as bilinguals for one reason or the other. I will not deal with bilingualism in any detail in this work but the term requires a few comments. The fact that linguists have not been able to agree on what bilingualism is has forced them to admit that there are different types of bilingualism. Environmental factors as well as learner characteristics will influence the linguistic result. The main dichotomy of bilinguals is *compound* and *coordinate*; a division which, however, has been severely criticized. Most researchers say that compound bilinguals have been brought up in a bilingual environment and have consequently acquired two languages at the same time (*acquire* as a contrast to *learn*. The division was introduced by Krashen, 1978).

Coordinate bilinguals, however, have learned the second language at a later stage, usually after the age of ten, and outside the home (Albert. & Obler, 1978).

One can argue that there is only one true type of bilingualism - the compound, since it is possible that the coordinate bilingual is not equally fluent in both languages. This being my opinion I want to distinguish between bilinguals and *near-natives*; that is, speakers who are extremely fluent in a second language but cannot be called bilinguals. Yet there is a second group of fluent second language speakers - *the advanced learners*, who do not reach the level of the near-natives but are still very fluent. As mentioned earlier ***non-native* is used in this thesis when referring to near-natives and advanced learners**. The reason for the distinction between the two groups is explained further in 3.2.

When native and non-native speakers are compared, a key question is the term **proficiency**. This is a term not very easily defined. Vollmer (1981) says that the only thing we can say about proficiency is that it is what proficiency tests measure. What is traditionally being measured is knowledge of rules and the ability to understand and produce the language by oral and written means. There is obviously more involved in language proficiency than these fairly easily tested fields.

Cummins et al. (1984) have pointed out that proficiency is linked to personality factors of the individual. This is probably true. There are as many regional varieties of a language as there are individual varieties. Each person's proficiency is a combination of different fields of the language and one field may be more dominant in one person. Some fields may be very difficult, or even impossible to learn in a foreign language. It would be of interest to find these fields and use them when measuring language proficiency.

Generally we distinguish between perceptive and productive proficiency. In discussing the term proficiency Lantolf and Frawley (1988) describe proficiency as having communicative competence; i.e. having the ability to produce and understand language.

Hammerly distinguishes between second language *competence* and *proficiency* and defines competence as "knowledge about, and ability to use, an SL in terms of three components, namely, linguistic, communicative, and cultural competence" (1991:41). Hammerly continues: "The difference between SL competence as I have defined it and SL proficiency is primarily one of emphasis. SL competence focuses on the application of linguistic competence to communicative situations; in the classroom it is developed systematically. Proficiency stresses survival in communicative situations, with lesser focus on the language as such".

Hammerly goes on to define a third term, *SL performance*, as "the linguistic, communicative and/or cultural behaviour itself".

I am convinced that there is much more included in language proficiency than the ability to communicate. If not, then anybody fairly fluent in a second language could be regarded as bilingual - and this is not the case. The native speaker does have features that distinguish him from the non-native. It is often said that non-native speakers lack the native *intuition* of a language. Certain investigations, however, have shown that there is no such thing as native intuition. Lehiste (1971), for example, found that native speakers in fact do not agree on what is grammatical, pointing to considerable variation among native speakers when determining what is right and wrong. She also found that there are no big differences between native and non-native speakers. Lehiste says: "If there is so much variation among the native speakers and so much similarity between native and non-native speakers, the appeal to the native speaker's intuitive knowledge of grammaticality seems to lose much of its force" (1971: 739).

When measuring the non-native speakers' degree of near-nativeness traditional proficiency tests are obviously of little use. When testing things like vocabulary, grammar, listening comprehension and reading comprehension non-native speakers may well reach a native level. What we need to find is other fields of language proficiency and ways of testing these fields. In this work I want to draw the attention to one such possible "hidden" field - **attitudes**, and more specifically **attitudes to acceptability**.

Apart from Lehiste's work mentioned above very little has been done to compare native and non-native attitudes to language usage.

A few linguists have studied native speakers' reactions to non-native usage of a particular language but such investigations have mainly tried to identify social variations.

What is more interesting here is the speakers' opinions about the usage of language - what is accepted and what is not? Mittins et al. (1970) investigated British native speakers' attitudes to certain English sentences. The testees were to consider the sentences in four situations and decide whether they found them acceptable or unacceptable in given situations. My work is based on the same ideas but is extended to include a comparison between native and non-native speakers in order to investigate possible differences between the two groups.

Before I continue with the presentation of the results of the investigation I will give the basic outlines of the thesis. The first three chapters give the background information on the study and function as an introduction to the subject. Chapter four focuses on the presentation of the test results. I interpret the testees' general attitudes and give a more detailed analysis of the answers. A summary of the answers to each tested sentence is given at the end of chapter four. I hope that this summary will especially interest teachers of English and function as a source for consolidation. Chapter five consists of a discussion of the results. I will relate the results to English language teaching and discuss the concept of standard language. I will also compare those sentences which are included both in this work and in Mittins' to see if the attitudes to these sentences have changed. The last chapter summarizes the whole thesis.

2. AIMS AND HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY.

Mittins's survey of native speakers in England (1970) provides the basic idea for the present investigation. Since comparisons between native and non-native speakers' attitudes are almost non-existent it was felt to be worth while investigating whether advanced learners react in the same way.

The main purpose of the present investigation is to pinpoint native and non-native speakers' attitudes to the usage of certain English items. The items are to be considered in four situations and the question is: Are the items accepted or rejected and are the attitudes dependent on the situation? The results of the two subject groups will be compared in order to see if there are any differences between the groups. I hope that the study will give a current view of what is acceptable in English today. The study may function as a fresh source of knowledge where traditional grammars fail to give up-to-date information.

Some of the items tested by Mittins are included in the present investigation in order to compare the results. It might be argued that the differences between the subjects might make such a comparison problematic. Mittins tested his sentences in Britain whereas the present investigation was done in New Zealand. Mittins tested subjects of various ages and with various professions, while the New Zealand subjects are university students. These differences may affect the results to some extent.

The results gained by Mittins et al. in 1970 showed a general tendency towards **rejection** of the tested sentences. Twenty years later a change in attitudes is expected. The hypothesis is that most of the sentences tested now will be **accepted** by the majority of the native subjects. A difference in acceptance is expected when comparing the two subject groups. The native speakers are believed to be much more tolerant and have a majority of acceptance of the items, while the non-natives are expected to reject the items, since most of them are not accepted or recommended in grammars. It is natural that languages change among *native* speakers and innovations reach non-native speakers much later - if ever.

It is further suggested that native speakers make a distinction between informal and formal language on one hand and spoken and written language on the other, while the non-natives are not aware of these distinctions to the same extent. Since spoken language is faster and therefore less well planned than written language the yes-answers are expected to be concentrated around this situation, at least among the native speakers.

Most of the non-native subjects are involved in English language teaching. They are in other words models for other learners and responsible for forming a sense of English acceptability among students. **If** there are differences between the native and the non-native subjects and the differences are significant, how does that affect our English language teaching?

The investigation will also reveal how "near-native" the non-native subjects are in their attitudes to the usage of certain items. In the introduction I suggested that *attitudes* belong to what I call "hidden fields" of language proficiency. My belief is that very advanced non-native speakers can be separated from native speakers only by examining such fields. The hypothesis is that there are differences between the two groups of subjects, i.e. that non-native speakers are **not** able to reach a "near-native" level where attitudes are concerned. The hypothesis is mainly based on not having the same opportunities to use the language in everyday situations. Since the non-native subjects do not live in an English speaking environment they cannot always follow the changes which English (like any other language) is continuously undergoing. There are of course, also considerable variations in native speakers, especially across generations. If there are differences between the subject groups we must regard attitudes as "non-learnable" - a field of language where non-natives cannot reach a native level.

3. TEST MATERIAL.

Data used in the investigation was collected in New Zealand and Finland using a questionnaire consisting of sentences to be considered in four different situations. A pilot test was done among six New Zealanders in order to decide on the final sentences.

3.1. The questionnaire.

The model for the questionnaire (see appendix) was taken from Mittins et al. (1970). The composition of the questionnaire is basically the same as Mittins' but most of the tested items are different.

The questionnaire consists of twenty-five English sentences, chosen from various sources. The subjects were to read every sentence and decide whether it is appropriate or not in four different situations; spoken informal language, spoken formal language, written informal language and written formal language. The subjects were to answer Yes (Y) or No (N) in every section. They were also invited to give comments to the sentences, but this was not compulsory.

A few questions on the subjects' backgrounds were also included. These questions were naturally different for native and non-native speakers.

Every sentence consists of a main item (an interesting word, phrase or construction). The purpose of the investigation was to pinpoint the subjects' attitudes to these items. Mittins marked the items in his investigation (1970) with italics, while I have chosen not to do so, because the subjects' spontaneous reactions might be disturbed if the items were pointed out. In order to see exactly what the subjects reacted to in the various sentences they were invited to comment on each sentence. Since the comments were not obligatory, many chose not to do so. A more rewarding method would have been to tell the subjects to comment whenever answering no, but this might have caused a tendency to answer yes.

Quite a few of the sentences (1, 2, 4, 7, 10, 21) consist of items known as Americanisms. The term is far from satisfactory but is still used here for want of a better term. The attitudes to Americanisms vary among scholars and users. Generally, the acceptance of Americanisms increases as they spread. It is possible that other items (e.g. sentences number 3, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 25) will follow the same development. Sentences number 5, 8, 9, 18, 19, 20 and 24 conform to rules explicitly given in at least some pedagogical grammars but may be less frequently used than other expressions with the same meaning.

A presentation of each sentence is required. I have given the tested sentences in bold face and their correct or other (more common) alternative in italics. A short presentation of what is said in various grammars about the specific items is also included.

Number 1.

In case you need any information, please contact me.
If *you need any information, please contact me.*

This sentence is taken from *Longmans Dictionary of Common Errors* (hereafter *LDCE*) and is classified as an Americanism. The authors of the dictionary obviously prefer the non-american version. In Svartvik & Sager (1977): *Engelsk universitetsgrammatik* (EUG) (p. 331) '*in case*' is treated as a synonym of '*if*'. This grammar does not classify '*in case*' as an Americanism, though other Americanisms are mentioned.

Number 2.

It looked like it would rain.
It looked ***as if*** *it would rain.*

Sentence number two was included in Mittins' list of items (1970). In *EUG* (p. 336) it is said that '*like*' is sometimes used in informal language instead of '*as*' and '*as if*'. '*Like*' is used instead of '*as if*' especially in American English.

Number 3.

She was bored of talking to him.

She was bored ***with*** *talking to him.*

This sentence is taken from *LDCE*. In Collins Cobuild: *English Language Dictionary* (1987) it is said about '*with*': "You use **with** after words that describe feelings when you mention the thing or person that the feeling is directed towards. Eg. *I've just got fed up with washing*".

Number 4.

I have been playing piano since I was a child.

I have been playing ***the*** *piano since I was a child.*

According to the grammar, the verb '*play*' ('*learn*', '*practice*') is usually followed by the definite article when used with instruments (*EUG*, p. 160). Note that it is not said ***must be followed***, but *is* ***usually followed***. This means that there is space for variation in the grammar. The sentence is taken from *LDCE* and is described as an Americanism.

Number 5.

The commonest car is Toyota.

The ***most common*** *car is* ***the*** *Toyota.*

This sentence has its origins in Mittins' report. Mittins used the word '*commonest*' in the text (page 1). The rest of the sentence is invented by the author. The sentence consists of two interesting items. Let's look at the superlative form of '*common*' first. In *EUG* (p. 274) it is said that the superlative form -est is used with a) adjectives, which are monosyllabic when pronounced and b) adjectives, which end with -y, -ow, -le, -er, -ure.

It is also said that '*common*' is sometimes compared using endings. However, comparison with more/most tends to be more common here. Most disyllabic and all polysyllabic words are compared using more/most.

The other interesting item in this sentence concerns the definite article. The make of cars is used with the definite article (*EUG*, p. 178).

> Number 6.
>
> **The reason why I bought the car was because I thought it was cheap.**
>
> *The reason why I bought the car was* **that** *I thought it was cheap.*
>
> **OR:** ***I bought the car*** because I thought it was cheap.

This sentence is an example of contamination; two similar phrases are mixed. The sentence is taken from *LDCE*.

> Number 7.
>
> **The magazine has a hundred fifty pages.**
>
> *The magazine has a hundred* ***and*** *fifty pages.*

Again an example of what is classified as an Americanism. The sentence is from *LDCE*. In *EUG* (p. 263) the cardinal 110 is written '*a (one) hundred and ten*'.

> Number 8.
>
> **We met up with him at the zoo.**
>
> *We* **met** *him at the zoo.*

The sentence was included in Mittins' list (1977). Mittins is uncertain whether there is a distinction between '*meet*' and '*meet up*' or not. In Collins Cobuild: *English Language Dictionary* (1987:905) the expression '*meet up*' occurs under '*meet*'. It says:

> "1. If you **meet** someone or **meet up** with them, 1.1. you happen to be in the same place as them and start talking to them. You may know the other persons, but be surprised to see them, or you not may know them at all.[—] 1.2. you both go to the same place, which you have earlier arranged to do, so that you can talk or do something together."

'*Meet*' and '*meet up*' further have the definition:

> "1.3. If two things **meet** or **meet up**, they join together at a particular place."

'*Meet with someone*' is mentioned as common in American English meaning "go to the same place as them, which you have earlier arranged to do, so that you can talk to them or do something else together.

Number 9.

Have you any coffee?

Do you have *any coffee?*

OR: ***Have you got*** *any coffee?*

This sentence is perfectly correct as it is. However, '*have*' is usually constructed with '*do*'. Constructions without '*do*' are to be found mainly in British English. '*Have got*' is an informal variety, according to *EUG* (p. 22).

Number 10.

My new school was very different than the old one.

My new school was very different **to** *the old one.*

'*Different*' is used with two prepositions; '*to*' and '*from*'. In *LDCE*, where the sentence was found, the usage '*different than*' is said to be much less common in British English than '*different than/to*'. In an example concerning the use of '*no*' *EUG* (p. 235) mentions that the preposition '*than*' is used in American English instead of '*from*'.

Number 11.

According to Henry's opinion, less money should be spent on weapons.

In *Henry's opinion, less money should be spent on weapons.*

OR: *According to* **Henry**, *less money should be spent on weapons.*

This sentence is similar to sentence number 6. Two expressions meaning the same are mixed (contamination). The sentence is taken from *LDCE*.

> Number 12.
>
> **Each of the children win a prize.**
>
> *Each of the children* ***wins*** *a prize.*

This sentence was found in Christophersen & Sandved: *An Advanced English Grammar* (1969) and was included because it is known to be a confusing part of the English grammar.

EUG (p. 244) says that '*each*' is used to refer to persons or things each individually. The example given is:

> "Each of the girls was checked".

Collins Cobuild (*English Grammar*, 1990: 108) support the singular verbal.

> "When the quantifier 'each of' is used with a plural noun group the verb after the noun group is always singular."

According to Quirk et al. (1972:219) in *A Grammar of Contemporary English* the plural noun can be looked upon as either individuals or a group when using co-references.

> "Each and Every + of can have a singular or plural pronoun for co-reference.
>
> Eg. Each of the students should have their/his own books."

Number 13.

There were less road accidents this Christmas.

There were **fewer** *road accidents this Christmas.*

'*Little*' ('*less*') is used as a unit of measurement, while '*few*' ('*fewer*') is used with plural nouns (*EUG*, p. 250). The sentence was tested by Mittins (1970).

Number 14.

He is older than me.

He is older than **I.**

'*I*' is the subject form and '*me*' the object form of the personal pronoun in first person singular. *EUG* (p. 184) mentions that it is difficult to know which form to use after '*but*', '*than*', '*as*' and '*like*'. The example given is:

> "She is older than me"

The subject form '*I*' is said to be hypercorrect in this case. The authors further say that it is sometimes preferable to use a complete comparative subordinate clause (or a relative pronoun).

> Eg. "She is older than I am (than myself)."

The sentence is taken from Mittins (1970).

Number 15.

The process is very unique.

The process is unique.

This is also a sentence tested twenty years ago by Mittins. Similar words (like *dead*) are discussed in *LDCE*:

"Something can be absolutely unique or totally unique but not very/more/most/somewhat etc. unique. There are no degrees of uniqueness, when unique means 'the only one of its kind'."

Number 16.

This is a dangerous corner. You must go slow.
This is a dangerous corner. You must go ***slowly.***

The item ('*slow*') was included in Mittins' investigation, but the sentence used here is slightly different from the original one (This is a dangerous curve. You'd better go slow). The native pilot subjects objected to the word '*curve*' in the original sentence, which led to a change to '*corner*'. The form '*you'd better*' was excluded, since it might be looked upon as inappropriate in (especially formal) written language. The purpose of these changes was to avoid drawing the subjects' attention to other items than the intended one.

The word '*slow*' is used as an adverb in this sentence. According to both *EUG* and Collins Cobuild: *English Language Dictionary* the adverb forms with and without the ending -ly are equal in this case. '*Slow*' is often used in the expression '*to go slow*'. Another example given in *EUG* (p. 306) shows the opportunity to chose between '*slow*' and '*slowly*' ; *To walk (drive) slow[ly]*.

Number 17.

Womens clothes are expensive.
Women's clothes are expensive.

The sentence is invented by the author. Genitive is indicated by either s-form or of-form in English.

Number 18.

The couple was sitting behind me.
The couple **were** *sitting behind me.*

The word '*couple*' indicates that it is a question of two people and is therefore normally followed by a plural verb.

Collins Cobuild (1990): *English Language Dictionary*:

> "A couple (such as husband/wife) is used with a plural verb (unless identified as one of a number of couples).

> Eg. Tonight's winning couple is George and Dorothy Lightfoot."

EUG (p. 145): '*Couple*' is a collective noun which indicates a group or crowd. The word is often (in British English) treated as a plural one. American English often uses singular. The grammar further says (p. 343) that a general tendency in British English is to use plural with collective nouns when the different individuals of the group are referred to and singular when the group as a whole is more important. The authors point out that it is not always possible to explain the choice.

The sentence is from *LDCE*.

Number 19.

None of the children was able to remember it.
None of the children ***were*** *able to remember it.*

This sentence is from Christophersen & Sandved (1969): *An Advanced Grammar of English*. It touches the same problem as sentence number 12, i.e. the choice of singular or plural verb. In the grammar book (p.248) mentioned above the rule is formulated as follows:

> 'None' followed by 'of' + a nominal in plural often takes a plural nominal."

Since '*often*' is mentioned one can understand that the plural nominal in some cases might take a singular verbal. '*Neither*' functions in the same way as '*none*'.

> (P. 248): "When 'neither' is a nominal and is followed by an of-phrase containing a plural nominal it is often, perhaps most often, followed by a plural verb."

"The use of a plural verbal in this construction is often frowned upon by some grammarians."

This is supported in *EUG* (p. 230) in an example sentence.

"None of the girls is in.

(Also with plural verb: None of the girls are in.)"

EUG continues:

"Singulart pronomen är mindre vanligt i BrE".

Eg. BrE: Are any of the girls in?

AmE: Is any of the girls in?

Number 20.

They will loan you the glasses.

They will ***lend*** *you the glasses*

The sentence is taken from Mittins (1970). *'Lend'(v)* means: "to allow somebody to use something of yours for a period of time."

Eg. Will Bob lend you his car?

'Loan'(v) means lending something to someone.

Eg. He never loaned his car to anybody.

Eg. I'll loan you fifty dollars.

(Collins Cobuild, 1987)

The two words would consequently be synonyms.

Number 21.

I want to apologize for not having written you before.

I want to apologize for not having written ***to*** *you before.*

The sentence was found in *LDCE*. According to the dictionary this sentence is typical in American usage, which is supported in Collins Cobuild (1987).

> "Write to someone or write them a letter.
>
> AmE also write someone."

Number 22.

Television is a very popular media.
Television is a very popular ***medium.***

'*Medium*' is the singular form and '*media*' the plural. The sentence was to be found in *LDCE*.

Number 23.

Not only Tom but Harry are going.
Not only Tom but Harry ***is*** *going.*

The underlying construction of this sentence is *not only Tom is going but Harry is going*, therefore '*is*' not '*are*'.

Number 24.

Am I or you responsible?
Am I or you responsible?

This sentence is totally correct. It is taken from Christophersen & Sandved (1969:249). The rule of proximity says that "when nouns are different the verbal agrees with the nearest noun".

Number 25.

I would of gone to the beach but it was too cold.
I would ***have*** *gone to the beach but it was too cold.*

This is the author's own example. The fact that the construction '*would of*' has been seen in material written by native students gave the sentence a place in the questionnaire.

3.2. The subjects.

The questionnaire was handed out to two groups of subjects; native speakers of English and non-native speakers of English. A total number of eighty subjects took part in the investigation.

The native subjects are students at Auckland University in New Zealand. It was preferable to find native subjects with no specific knowledge of linguistics. I was fortunate enough to run the test mainly among first year students. The students are enrolled in various courses but they all attended the course Psychology 1. when filling in the questionnaire. The students' main subject(s) should have no affect on the results.

It might be argued that geographic factors will affect the results. The New Zealand variety of English has its own features as any other variety of English. Tony Deverson writes in his article *New Zealand English Lexis; the Maori Dimension* (1991) that the most significant features of New Zealand English are the Maori elements in the vocabulary. Anyone who has been in the country knows that many Maori words and names are established in New Zealand English (e.g. *Kumura* = sweet potato, *Haka* = war-chant, *Tapu* = sacred, *Rotorua* = a place name).

The regional features will not be regarded in the study partly because it is impossible to cover the whole of the English speaking world in an investigation of this size and partly because the items are not believed to evoke any regional attitudes. New Zealand English is no more significant than any other variety of English (e.g. British English tested in Mittins' investigation 1970). However, since a few **Americanisms** are included both in this work and in Mittins', I will compare the New Zealand attitudes with the British ones to unveil possible differences.

73 students filled in the questionnaire. 17 answers were excluded from the analysis, since five testees did not fulfill the requirement of

nativeness and twelve answers were incomplete. This gives the total number of 56 native subjects (37 females and 19 males).

The non-native group of subjects consists of people who have learned English as a foreign language. They all live in a non-English speaking environment. All 24 (11 females and 13 males) have a university degree in English. The majority of the non-natives are involved in foreign language teaching. In their occupations they function not only as models for other learners but are constantly faced with the problems of acceptance.

It was my intention to compare the native speakers with near-native, meaning **very fluent** non-native speakers of English. As such subjects were difficult to find they were all contacted personally. In order to establish the subjects' proficiency level The Swansea Vocabulary Test (designed by P. Meara et. al.) was used. This is a computerised vocabulary test designed to estimate non-native speakers' overall vocabulary . The test has proved to correlate fairly well with a test package (Eurocentres' Joint Entrance Test), consisting of a grammar test, listening comprehension, reading comprehension and an oral interview, and can therefore be used when estimating students' overall ability in English. According to the results of the vocabulary test five subjects could be regarded as near-native speakers of English while the rest of the group (19) are best labelled advanced learners of English. The non-native speakers will, however, be regarded as one group in the analysis of the results.

3.3. The test situation.

The data was collected in two periods. The native subjects filled in the questionnaire in Auckland in March 1991. The subjects attended a course in psychology and I was able to use the last thirty minutes of three lessons. The students were informed about the investigation and were invited to volunteer. All students present accepted to take part in the investigation. A short oral presentation of the purpose of the investigation was given followed by instructions on how to fill in the questionnaire. The subjects used an average time of fifteen minutes to complete the task.

The non-native subjects were tested in May 1991. They all received a letter with information about the investigation and a request to volunteer. The test was carried out at an agreed time. Before the questionnaire was handed out the subjects received the same oral information as given to the native subjects. The non-natives used approximately the same amount of time to consider the sentences as the natives.

4. PRESENTATION OF RESULTS.

A total number of eighty subjects have considered twenty-five sentences in four situations. There are fifty-three unanswered sections. Sentences numbered seventeen and twenty-five will be analysed only in written language, which reduces the total number of answers by three-hundred and twenty. Hence there are 7627 answers in all (25x4x80-53-320=7627).

Native and non-native subjects are separated in the presentation of the results so that their answers can be compared. Female and male results will not be considered separately. I will start with an overview of the answers, then look at every situation and every sentence separately. Spoken and written language will be compared as well as informal and formal situations.

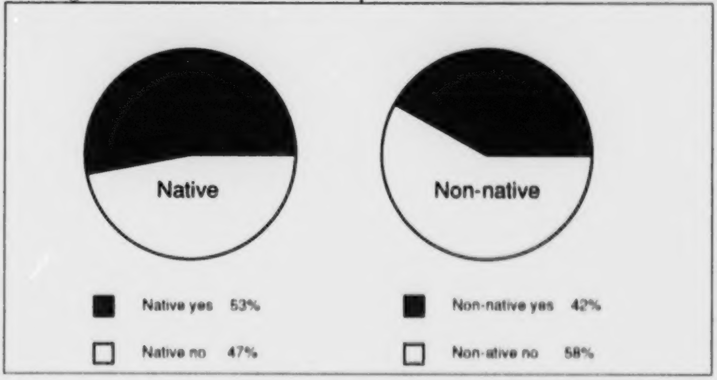
4.1. General tendencies.

Of 7627 answers (native + non-native) 49.7% are yes-answers. In general then, the majority of the answers is no-answers, even if the division is close to fifty-fifty. There is, however, a difference between the two groups of subjects. The native subjects have a total number of 5332 answers (25x4x56-44-224=5332). 53.3% of all answers are yes-answers. The number suggests that the natives have a tendency towards acceptance. The total number of non-native answers is 2295 (25 x 4 x 24 - 9 - 96 = 2295). The majority of the answers is no-answers (58.3%).

The difference between the native and non-native answers is illustrated in diagram 1.

34

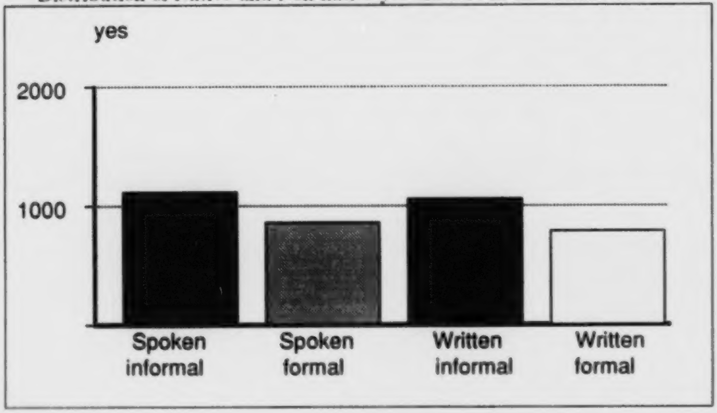
Diagram 1. Native and non-native yes- and no-answers.



The results of Mittins' investigation (1970) show a tendency towards rejection of the tested sentences. 53,2% of the answers were rejections. Because only seven sentences in this work are identical with the sentences tested by Mittins it is not possible to compare the results as such. But the tested sentences are of a similar type and this makes it possible to compare the **general tendencies**. The subjects of the two investigations are also different (both in age and nationality), which makes it impossible to make too many comparisons. It will, however, be interesting to see how the natives in this investigation reacted to those sentences which are included in both works compared to Mittins' subjects. Such a comparison will be presented in chapter 6.

There are four situations to consider for each sentence. In order to see how the answers are distributed in the situations the yes-answers have been counted. Diagram 2 will show in what situation the sentences are most accepted.

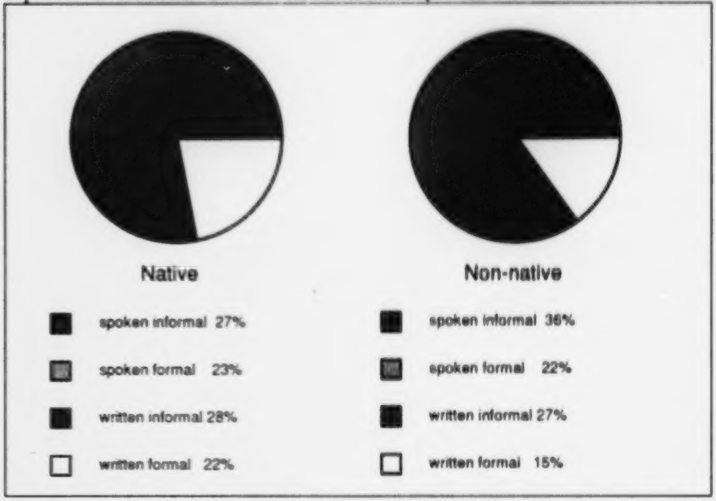
Diagram 2.
Distribution of Native and Non-native yes-answers in the situations.



The diagram shows a fairly even distribution of the yes-answers. In general there are more yes-answers in the informal situations than in the formal situations. The degree of formality seems to be more important than the means of transmission (spoken or written).

In diagram 3 the native and the non-native answers can be compared. The native results show that the yes-answers are fairly equally distributed in all four situations. The difference between spoken informal and written formal languages is greater among the non-natives than among the natives. Both groups have a higher percentage of yes-answers in the two informal situations than in the formal, which supports the conclusion made above, i.e. that it is the actual situation which determines the language used, not the means of transmission.

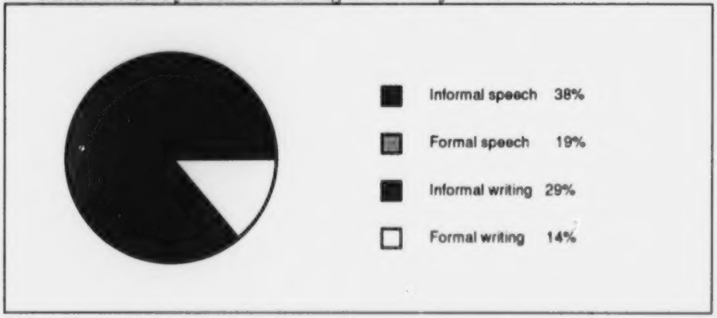
Diagram 3.
Separate distributions of Native and Non-native yes-answers in the four situations.



It is interesting to come back to Mittins' investigation and make a comparison between the English subjects and the subjects in this investigation. 41% of the answers 1970 were yes-answers. The differences between the situations are much more obvious here than among the New Zealanders. There is a distinct difference between informal speech and formal writing, which indicates that the situation is important. This points at a change in language usage in general. The degree of formality was more important twenty years ago.

The pattern of answers given by Mittins' subjects is in fact similar to the non-native subjects in the present investigation rather than to the New Zealand subjects. One explanation of this may be that non-natives are not able to follow all changes that occur in English. The differences between the two native groups can also be due to the age difference of the subjects. The native subjects in this investigation are all university students while Mittins tested persons of various ages. The distribution of the yes-answers 1970 is presented in diagram 4.

Diagram 4.
Distribution of yes-answers among native subjects 1970.[1]



The fact that the differences between the amount of yes-answers in informal and formal situations are greater among the non-native subjects than among the natives suggests that the native attitudes are not dependent on situation as much as the non-natives. This totally contradicts the hypothesis. A closer analysis of the type of answers is needed in order to draw any conclusions.

When a subject has answered yes **or** no in four situations for a sentence he has not distinguished between the situations. Three yes- or no-answers for a sentence indicates that the subject would change his usage of the language only in one situation. Thus, the majority of the situations thus have the same answer.

56% of the native answers are with two yes- and two no-answers. The rest are consequently such answers where the situations have not led to different answers. Only 17% of the answers are absolutely similar in all situations (4 x yes or 4 x no).

The majority of the non-native answers are similar in all situations. 43% are with four yes- or no-answers. Only 20% of the answers are "fifty-fifty-answers".

This indicates that the native subjects distinguish between the situations, while the non-natives react more in the same way to a sentence regardless of the situation. The high percentage of yes-answers in spoken informal language is consequently due to a non-native pattern of 3 x no answers.

---

[1] The diagram is based on table 1, Mittins et al. 1970:2.

Since the majority of the native answers are of the type 2 x yes and 2 x no per sentence it is of interest to see if spoken and written or informal and formal situations "go together", i.e. if the pattern is Y Y N N / N N Y Y or Y N Y N / N Y N Y.

The results show that 86% of these answers have the pattern Y N Y N / N Y N Y. This means that it is not primarily the means of transmission (speech or written text), which determines the native speaker's degree of acceptability but the actual situation. The conclusion is supported by the fact that very few answers have the pattern Y Y N N / N N Y Y. The analysis gave a further surprising third pattern of answers: Y N N Y / N Y Y N. This pattern indicates that for example sentence number 7. *The magazine has a hundred fifty pages* might be accepted in spoken informal and written formal language but rejected in spoken formal and written informal language. It is easy to understand why the sentence is accepted in spoken informal language but rejected in spoken formal. The subject is perhaps aware of the missing word and and feels that it should be inserted in formal language. But why is the sentence rejected in written informal language and accepted in a written formal situation? It is possible that spoken formal and written informal are regarded as similar situations. What is rejected in formal spoken language is also inappropriate in written informal language. Then it would be natural to reject the sentence in written formal language as well. The pattern is no coincidence, since there are more answers of this type than of the type Y Y N N / N N Y Y. At this stage I have no answers to the question.

4.2. Sentences in different situations.

Language has three main functions: 1. **Inter-individual function** (communication between individuals). 2. **Intra-individual function** (the personal process of interpreting the environment, analysing problems, planning and controlling actions and recognizing and remembering phenomena) and 3. **Identity function** (the connection to social and regional groups) (Palmer, 1986). The function and the current situation both have their effects on language.

The two means of transmission are speech and writing. Though there are considerable differences between the two systems they are **not** different languages. They simply have different functions, even if these sometimes overlap. Spoken language is often incorrectly characterized as unorganized. Spoken language is, in fact, as complex as written, but in a different way. Written language is static and dense. We have a number of fixed spellings of existing words and also fixed principles for how to spell new words (Halliday, 1989). When written language appears to be more organized than spoken we must remember the invisible *writing process* that lies behind the text.

Spoken language is dynamic and intricate. It is characterized by pauses, hesitations and corrections. In contrast to written language spoken language cannot show sentence and paragraph boundaries. On the other hand, spoken language includes prosodic and paralinguistic elements, which are left out in written language (Halliday, 1989).

Both spoken and written language are used in various situations. When speaking with or writing to family members, friends and other familiar persons we have an informal situation. The opposite situation is the formal, when language is used to address unknown people.

In order to investigate exactly how the subjects have reacted to each sentence, every sentence has been analysed in all four situations. The **yes-answers** of every sentence in the four situations respectively have been counted. The number of yes-answers for every sentence has been divided with the total number of subjects. This gives the percentage of subjects accepting the sentence in a particular situation. A sentence is regarded as accepted in a specific situation when over fifty per cent of the subjects have ticked yes in the section. The analysis will show whether the situation is important to language use.

4.2.1. Spoken informal language.

If more than 50% of the subjects have answered yes to a certain sentence it is regarded as accepted in the particular situation. The sentences with the highest percentage of acceptance are clearly the most accepted sentences in the particular situation.

The percentage of native and non-native subjects, who have answered yes in the spoken informal section is presented in table 2. Sentences number 17 and 25 are excluded, since they will be regarded only in written language.

Table 1.
Amount (in%) of yes-answers for each sentence in spoken informal language.

Sentence	Native	N-native
	% Yes	
1.	27.4	47.8
2.	56.4	91.7
3.	78.6	58.3
4.	48.2	58.3
5.	89.3	62.5
6.	83.9	79.2
7.	69.6	43.5
8.	76.8	54.2
9.	67.9	66.7
10.	63.6	41.7
11.	46.4	45.8
12.	54.5	25.0
13.	65.4	75.0

Sentence	Native	N-native
	% Yes	
14.	92.9	95.8
15.	26.8	75.0
16.	58.9	83.3
17.	-	-
18.	72.7	87.5
19.	67.3	66.7
20.	69.6	41.7
21.	25.0	45.8
22.	35.7	58.3
23.	69.6	37.5
24.	58.9	83.3
25	-	-

It is possible to rank the sentences according to percentage of acceptance. The following sentences are accepted by the subjects in spoken informal language.

Native ranking list:

1. **Number 14.**
2. **Number 5**
3. **Number 6.**

Non-native ranking list:

1. **Number 14.**
2. **Number 2.**
3. **Number 18.**

4. Number 3.

5. Number 8.
6. Number 18.

7. Number 7.
Number 20.
Number 23.
8. Number 9.
9. Number 19.

10. Number 13.
11. Number 10.
13. Number 2.
14. Number 12.

4. Number 16.
Number 24.
5. Number 6.
6. Number 13.
Number 15.
7. Number 9.
Number 19.

8. Number 5.
9. Number 3.
Number 4.
Number 22.
10. Number 8.
12. Number 24.

The lists show that the majority of the sentences are accepted by more than 50% of the native subjects. The non-native subjects have accepted approximately as many sentences as the natives (15) but the list shows somewhat different sentences.

Sentences number 4, 15, 16 and 22 are accepted by the majority of the non-native speakers but not by the native subjects. On the other hand, sentences 7, 10, 12, 20 and 23 are accepted by the natives but not by the non-natives. Sentence number 15 is probably regarded as too formal for spoken informal language among the native subjects. The students have not been able to imagine a situation where they would use such an expression. The non-native subjects, though, feel that the sentence is appropriate in spoken informal language. A possible explanation is that the subjects do not regard anything as too formal. One tends to be more cautious in a foreign language in order to avoid mistakes. The same is probably true for number 16. The natives know that they would say the sentence differently. One has to bear in mind that the native subjects compare the sentences with their own everyday speech in this situation, a speech, which is fast and consists of colloquial phrases to some extent. Non-native speakers do not have this speech to compare with, since they do not speak English as their everyday language. Non-native speakers are seldom aware of colloquialisms.

It is surprising that sentence number 4 is accepted among non-natives but not among the New Zealanders. The rule which says that an instrument must be proceded by the definite article is usually much emphazised in English language teaching and should be well established among the non-natives. A reason for the acceptance of the item in this situation might be the frequent contact with American English (through television and films). The item has been heard and is regarded as acceptable in informal spoken language. Whether the sentence is accepted in the other three situations remains to be seen. The reason for the rejection of the sentence by natives might be an avoidance of Americanisms. Comments on the sentence have shown that the students are aware of the American usage of the item. However, the rate of acceptance of sentence number 4 is still fairly high among the natives (48.2%), which shows that the construction is not unfamiliar to the students.

Another Americanism appears in sentence number 7. This sentence is accepted by the majority of the native subjects but rejected by the non-natives. This fact speaks against the hypothesis above (avoidance of Americanisms in NZ). Similar cases are number 10 and 20.The sentences, which are known as Americanisms, are accepted by the natives but not by the non-natives.

Most of the natives have agreed on accepting number 23. Even as many as 37.5% of the non-natives have answered yes here. We can already see that what is regarded as incorrect in grammars is not necessarily rejected by language users.

A few sentences on the top of the native list are towards the end of the non-native list. Sentences numbered 5,3 and 8 are on the top of the native list but on the bottom on the non-native. On the other hand, the sentences numbered 2, 24 and 13 are on the first half of the non-native list, but towards the end of the native.

4.2.2. Spoken formal language.

Table 2.
Amount (in%) of ***yes-answers*** *in spoken formal.*

Sentence	Native	N-native
	% Yes	
1.	72.5	73.9
2.	52.7	29.2
3.	26.0	37.5
4.	88.3	16.7
5.	19.6	29.2
6.	21.4	41.7
7.	40.2	13.0
8.	32.6	16.7
9.	55.3	45.0
10.	45.4	8.3
11.	75.0	37.5
12.	70.9	12.5
13.	72.7	37.5

Sentence	Native	N-native
	% Yes	
14.	39.3	58.3
15.	92.0	54.2
16.	65.4	54.2
17.	-	-
18.	27.3	83.3
19.	27.3	66.7
20.	50.0	33.3
21.	40.2	50.0
22.	94.6	37.5
23.	25.0	16.7
24.	37.5	37.5
25.	-	-

Sentences with a majority of yes-answers are slightly fewer in spoken formal language than in spoken informal. When the accepted sentences are compared the native and non-native ranking lists look as follows:

Native ranking list:

1. **Number 22.**
2. **Number 15.**
3. **Number 4.**
4. **Number 11.**
5. **Number 13.**

6. **Number 1.**
7. **Number 12.**
8. **Number 16.**

Non-native ranking list:

1. **Number 18.**
2. **Number 1.**
3. **Number 19.**
4. **Number 14.**
5. **Number 15.**
   Number 16.

Compared to spoken informal language we notice that sentences 6, 7, 8, 10, 14, 18, 19, 20 and 24 have fallen out from the native list of accepted sentences. Sentences number 1, 4, 11, 15, 16 and 22 are added to the list. These sentences did not reach a percentage over 50 in spoken informal language. The sentences seem to be considered as too formal to be used in spoken informal language. It might be worth mentioning that most of these sentences were accepted by the majority of the non-native subjects in spoken informal language. Sentences 2, 9, 12 and 13 are accepted by more than 50% of the native subjects in both spoken situations.

The non-native speakers have accepted the sentences far less in spoken formal language than in informal language (6 accepted sentences compared to 15 in informal spoken). This would suggest that the non-native subjects do make a difference between informal and formal situations. Whether this hypothesis is true is to be seen in the following situations.

Only sentence 1 is new on the non-native list. Sentences 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 13 have fallen out. Only sentences number 1, 15 and 16 are accepted by both groups, which shows that the groups very much disagree in this situation.

Again, common sentences are on different places on the lists. The natives have placed number 15 on top of the list, while the non-natives have the same sentence on the bottom. Number 1 is second on the non-native list and third last on the native one.

4.2.3. Written informal language.

Table 3.
Amount (in%) of ***yes-answers*** *in written informal language.*

Sentence	Native	N-native
	% Yes	
1.	41.2	60.9
2.	70.9	62.5
3.	71.4	54.2
4.	46.4	20.8
5.	60.7	33.3
6.	64.3	54.2
7.	58.9	21.7
8.	75.0	41.7
9.	46.4	41.7
10.	63.6	16.7
11.	51.8	25.0
12.	58.2	4.2
13.	65.4	62.5

Sentence	Native	N-native
	% Yes	
14.	80.3	83.3
15.	32.6	66.7
16.	41.1	37.5
17.	71.4	25.0
18.	63.6	83.3
19.	60.0	70.8
20.	67.0	25.0
21.	37.5	45.0
22.	35.7	41.7
23.	55.3	12.5
24.	39.3	54.2
25.	69.6	4.2

Most of the sentences (17 of 25) are accepted by more than 50% of the native subjects. The fact that more sentences are accepted in informal written language than in formal spoken suggests that the sentences are more accepted in informal language (spoken or written) than in spoken language in general. The sentences accepted in informal written language are:

Native ranking list:		**Non-native ranking list:**	
1.	**Number 14.**	**1.**	**Number 14.** **Number 18.**
2.	**Number 8.**	**2.**	**Number 19.**
3.	**Number 3.** **Number 17.**	**3.**	**Number 15.**
4.	**Number 2.**	**4.**	**Number 2.** **Number 13.**

5. Number 25.
6. Number 20.

7. Number 13.
8. Number 6.
9. Number 5.
10. Number 19.
11. Number 7.
12. Number 12.
13. Number 23.
14. Number 11.

5. Number 1.
6. Number 3.
Number 6.
Number 24.

The accepted sentences are approximately the same as in informal spoken language. It may seem somewhat surprising that the majority of the native subjects have accepted sentences number 17 and 25.

The non-native subjects have accepted more sentences in written informal language than in formal spoken language but fewer than in spoken informal language. A general tendency is that the non-natives accept fewer sentences than the natives. As expected, these subjects have rejected sentences number 17 and 25. The percentage is however not zero. In fact, as many as 25% of the subjects have accepted sentence number 17. Is this because they did not notice the missing apostrophe or is the genitive rule in English being loosened up? Since the number is so large, probably the latter.

As in spoken informal language, number 14 is first on the ranking list in both groups. Other sentences, which are found both on the native and non-native lists are 2, 3, 6, 13 and 19. Number 19 is on the top of the non-native list but towards the bottom of the native list. The other common sentences have fairly similar places on the lists.

4.2.4. Written formal language.

Table 4.
Amount (in%) of ***yes-answers*** *in written formal language.*

Sentence	Native	N-native
	% Yes	
1.	78.4	65.2
2.	47.3	16.7
3.	25.0	29.2
4.	66.1	16.7
5.	25.0	8.3
6.	16.7	20.8
7.	55.3	4.3
8.	25.0	8.3
9.	39.3	33.3
10.	40.0	4.2
11.	55.3	37.5
12.	61.0	8.3
13.	58.2	29.2
14.	37.5	20.8
15.	87.5	45.8
16.	46.4	25.0
17.	46.4	16.7
18.	23.6	66.7
19.	10.2	54.2
20.	37.5	12.5
21.	64.3	37.5
22.	94.6	25.0
23.	17.8	8.3
24.	33.9	20.8
25.	16.1	0.0

As expected, fewer sentences are accepted in this situation than in the others. The non-natives have accepted three sentences in written formal language and the native subjects 9 sentences.

Native ranking list:

1. **Number 22.**
2. **Number 15.**
3. **Number 1.**
4. **Number 4.**
5. **Number 21.**
6. **Number 12.**
7. **Number 13.**
8. **Number 7.**
   Number 11.

Non-native ranking list:

1. **Number 18.**
2. **Number 1.**
3. **Number 19.**

The two ranking lists are totally different. Only number 1 is on both the native and non-native list. This situation would consequently be the one where native and non-native speakers' attitudes differ most.

Sentences 1, 4, 15, 21 and 22 were not accepted in the previous situation (written informal). The sentences are obviously interpreted as formal. The same sentences (except for number 21) were accepted in spoken formal language, which confirms that the sentences are interpreted as formal.

Among the non-natives we notice that number 18 and 19 are accepted in all four situations and sentence number 1 was accepted in spoken formal language as well.

4.3. General acceptance of each sentence.

In order to rank the sentences according to acceptance the per cent of yes-answers in each situation for each sentence has been divided by four. This gives the average percentage of yes-answers for each sentence.

Table 5.
Average acceptance rates and ranking of sentences.

Sentence:	Native%	Ranking	Non-native%	Ranking
Number 1.	54.9	12	61.9	4
Number 2.	56.8	10	50.0	7
Number 3.	50.5	16	44.8	11
Number 4.	60.3	5	28.1	16
Number 5.	48.7	17	33.3	14
Number 6.	46.6	19	49.0	8
Number 7.	58.0	8	20.6	18
Number 8.	52.2	14	30.2	15
Number 9.	52.2	14	46.9	10
Number 10.	53.1	13	17.7	20
Number 11.	57.1	9	36.4	13
Number 12.	61.3	4	12.5	21
Number 13.	65.4	1	51.0	6
Number 14.	62.5	3	64.5	3
Number 15.	59.9	6	60.4	5
Number 16.	50.7	15	50.0	7
Number 17.	58.9	7	20.8	17
Number 18.	46.8	18	80.2	1
Number 19.	43.2	21	64.6	2
Number 20.	56.2	11	28.1	16
Number 21.	43.7	20	44.8	11
Number 22.	42.8	22	40.6	12
Number 23.	41.9	24	18.7	19
Number 24.	42.4	23	48.9	9
Number 25.	42.8	22	4.2	22

There are some differences between native and non-native subjects to point out. Generally, the natives have higher rates of acceptance. Of twenty-five sentences eighteen have a general acceptance over 50% among the natives while the corresponding non-native figure is seven out of twenty-five. The lowest native average percentage of acceptance is 41.9 (sentence number 23) and the highest is 65.4 (sentence number 13). The lowest non-native average per cent is 4.2 (sentence number 25) and the highest is 80.2 (sentence number 18). Still, only eight sentences (4, 10, 12, 17, 18, 20, 23, 25) have caused totally different reactions in the two groups.

The average acceptance rates give us a general idea of how the subjects have reacted to the sentences but tell us nothing about how the situations have affected the answers. For this purpose a mean score has been established for every sentence. A sentence with no-answers in all four situations (4 x no) is given no points (0), a sentence with one yes-answer and three no-answers (1 x yes) is given one point. A sentence with 50% yes-answers (2 x yes) gets two points, three yes-answers (3 x yes) is worth three points and a totally accepted sentence (4 x yes) is given four points.

All answers to every sentence were counted and given points. This gives a total point for every sentence, which is divided by the total number of subjects to get mean scores. A sentence with at least 50% yes-answers (2-4 x yes) will get a higher point than a sentence with only one or no yes-answers (0-1 x yes). A mean score of, for instance, 2, means that the sentence in general has two yes-answers and two no-answers. The more yes-answers a sentence has (i.e. the more situations with yes) the higher mean score it gets.

A comparison between native and non-native reactions to the sentences can be made in table 6. The mean score for each sentence is given.

Table 6.
Mean scores of sentence.

Sentence	Native	Non-native
1.	2.2	2.5
2.	2.3	2.0
3.	2.0	1.8
4.	2.4	1.2
5.	2.0	1.3
6.	1.8	2.0
7.	2.3	0.8
8.	2.1	1.2
9.	2.1	1.9
10.	2.1	0.7
11.	2.2	1.5
12.	2.5	0.5
13.	2.6	2.1
14.	2.5	2.6
15.	2.4	2.4
16.	2.1	2.0
17.	2.3	0.8
18.	1.9	3.2
19.	1.8	2.7
20.	2.3	1.1
21.	1.8	1.9
22.	2.6	1.6
23.	1.7	0.8
24.	1.7	2.0
25.	1.6	0.1

4.4. Summary of reactions to sentences.

The analyses of every sentence in all situations have shown that most of the tested sentences are accepted by the majority of the subjects. Native subjects have a tendency to accept more sentences than non-native subjects, which is probably due to the fact that native speakers use English in all sorts of situations, while most non-native speakers' usage is restricted to classroom conversation, reading literature in English and to journeys abroad every now and then. Non-native speakers have studied the English grammar as a university subject and are probably more aware of the rules.

A summary of every sentence is possible when looking at all situations at the same time. The symbols following each sentence are to illustrate in what situations more than 50% of the subjects have answered yes. The rectangle illustrates the four situations; Spoken informal - spoken formal - written informal - written formal. A black square means that the majority of the subjects have answered yes in that particular situation.

Number 1.

In case you need any information, please contact me.

Native results:

The sentence has a majority of yes-answers in spoken and written formal language, but is rejected in spoken and written informal language. It is possible that '*in case*' is interpreted as a formal phrase because '*if*' is shorter and simplier but it is also possible that the word '*contact*' has caused the result. The students might prefer '*call me*' or '*give me a call*'. Comments like "would say *ring me* rather than *contact me*" and "spoken informal would use more slang, eg. *give me a buzz*" actually support the latter explanation. These comments show that it is not the phrase *in case*, which has caused the rejection in informal language but the construction of the sentence and the word '*contact*'. One can therefore draw the conclusion that '*in case*' is fully accepted among the native speakers.

☐■☐■

Non-native results:

The sentence has a majority of yes-answers in all situations but informal spoken. Like the native speakers, the non-native seem to classify the sentence as too formal to be used in informal spoken language.

There are three non-native comments to the sentence. Two of these have objected to 'in case' and the third wanted to change 'any'. It is interesting that those who objected to 'in case' have answered N N N Y and N Y Y N in the sections, which indicates that the item is not considered incorrect but more formal than '*if*'.

Number 2.

It looked like it would rain.

Native results:

The sentence is accepted by the majority of the subjects in all situations but written formal language. There are no comments that would explain the results. The explanation is probably that they simply prefer '*as if*' or something else. The sentence was tested by Mittins et al. (1970) who found that it was greatly rejected. The sentence had a general rate of acceptance of 12% and was on the last end of the ranking list (48th of 50).

Non-native results:

The sentence has a majority of yes-answers in spoken and written informal language but is rejected in spoken and written formal language. Non-native speakers do distinguish between informal and formal language, though the hypothesis was that this is not the case. The comments given show that '*like*' has caused objection. British English has a long tradition in English teaching in Finland and Americanisms might be looked upon as errors.

■ □ ■ □

Number 3.

She was bored of talking to him.

Native results:

This sentence has a majority of yes-answers in spoken and written informal language. The sentence is rejected in formal language. One student says in the comments that the sentence is incorrect but would be used. This attitude is probably true for many of the sentences - one is aware of a certain "incorrectness" but the item is still accepted in informal language.

■ □ ■ □

Non-native results:

The native subjects show reactions similar to those of the natives. The sentence is accepted in spoken and written informal language. Prepositions are difficult in English and non-natives often make mistakes. It is still surprising that these subjects have accepted the sentence in two situations. One would expect them to use the **same** preposition in all situations. It is possible that expressions like '*tired of*' and '*sick of*' have interfered with '*bored with*'.

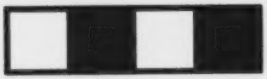
■ □ ■ □

Number 4.

I have been playing piano since I was a child.

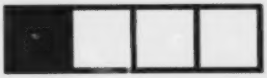
Native results:

This sentence is accepted in spoken and written formal language but not in informal. Two comments are given and both have inserted *the* in front of '*piano*'. One of the students pointed out that the item is an Americanism. What is surprising is that this student answered N Y N Y, which means he or she interprets Americanisms as formal (?). Now, no conclusions can be drawn on the basis of one comment. It is clear, however, that the subjects have not objected to the missing '*the*', since the sentence is accepted in formal language.



Non-native results:

The sentence has a majority of yes-answers only in spoken informal language. As expected, this grammar rule is well established among non-native speakers. The reason for acceptance in spoken informal language might be interference from Swedish (where no definite article is used), since most of the non-native subjects are native Swedish-speakers. Another explanation might be the frequent contact with American English through television and films. The familiarity with American English leads to an acceptance of American items. Still, as many as seven subjects have commented on the sentence and all but one have objected to the missing article.



Number 5.

The commonest car is Toyota.

Native results:

The subjects have accepted this sentence in spoken and written informal language. The explanation is probably that the students normally use and hear '*most common*' and look upon '*commonest*' as unacceptable. Still, such an item may be accepted in informal language. The students who have commented on the sentence say that it contains bad grammar, is incorrect and should have '*most common*' in formal language. Nobody has commented on the missing article in front of '*Toyota*'. It is a possibility that the sentence is rejected because of this item.

■☐■☐

Non-native results:

The sentence is accepted only in spoken informal language among the non-native subjects. The non-native speakers obviously prefer '*most common*', at least according to the comments. Only one testee has objected to the missing definite article.

■☐☐☐

Number 6.

The reason why I bought the car was because I thought it was cheap.

Native results:

The sentence is accepted in spoken and written informal language. There are no comments on the sentence. This is a good example of how spoken language might look. Two expressions are mixed because there is no time to plan and replan the utterance. The reason for accepting the sentence in written informal language is probably that this is a situation where a very "spoken-like" language is used.

■ ☐ ■ ☐

Non-native results:

The non-native subjects agree with the native. The sentence is accepted in spoken and written informal language. The non-natives rely on their knowledge of grammar and object to the mixture of expressions.

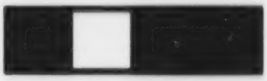
■ ☐ ■ ☐

Number 7.

The magazine has a hundred fifty pages.

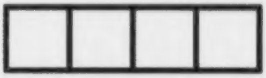
Native results:

There is a majority of yes-answers in all situations but spoken formal language. The result looks most surprising at first. Why would the sentence be used when talking to friends, writing to friends and writing e.g. a book but not when giving a speech? The margins are, however, narrow; the sentence is accepted by 48.2% in spoken formal language, which means the sentence could well be accepted in all situations. The subjects have hardly reacted to the missing *and*, since the sentence is accepted in three situations.



Non-native results:

This sentence is totally rejected by the non-natives. Spoken informal language is closest to a majority of acceptance with 43.5% yes-answers. This is another emphasized rule in the teaching of English (see number 4).



Number 8.

We met up with him at the zoo.

Native results:

The sentence is accepted by the majority of the subjects in spoken and written informal language. It is possible that the expression '*meet up with*' is typical New Zealand English. The same sentence was tested by Mittins (1970). He found that students were the most favourably-disposed group of subjects to the sentence but the majority of the students rejected the sentence. 48% of the students accepted the sentence in informal speech, 4% in formal speech and 2% in formal writing. The sentence is found on the bottom of Mittins' ranking list (47th of 50).

■☐■☐

Non-native results:

The sentence is accepted only in spoken informal language. The expression '*meet up with*' seems to be fairly unfamiliar to the subjects. One has written in the comments: "never heard".

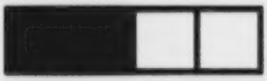
■☐☐☐

Number 9.

Have you any coffee?

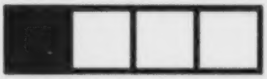
Native results:

The sentence has a majority of yes-answers in spoken informal and formal language. The sentence was expected to be accepted in written language rather than in spoken, because it is correct but somewhat stiff. One hypothesis is that '*do you have*' is interpreted as more correct and therefore more appropriate in written language.



Non-native results:

The non-natives have accepted the sentence only in spoken informal language. Surprisingly many have said in the comments that 'have you' is bad English and non-English. This explains the results.

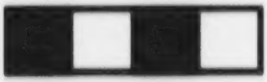


Number 10.

My new school was very different than the old one.

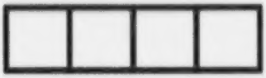
Native results:

Number 10 is accepted in spoken and written informal language but rejected in the two formal situations. There are many comments to this sentence and all have noticed the unusual preposition. This again indicates that the subjects object to an item but still accept the sentence in informal language. Those who have given comments to the sentence all wanted to use the preposition *to* instead of '*than*'.



Non-native results:

The sentence has no situations with a majority of yes-answers. The preposition is commented on but interestingly enough, the non-natives wanted to change '*than*' to '*from*'. There seems to be a difference in the use of '*from*' and to between native and non-native subjects.

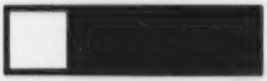


Number 11.

According to Henry's opinion, less money should be spent on weapons.

Native results:

The majority of the native subjects have answered yes in all situations but spoken informal. The sentence is probably regarded as too long to be used in informal speech. The comments show that one testee is aware of the mixture of expressions but would use either in informal language. The sentence is regarded as appropriate in formal language. Another student has commented that '*Mr. Henry + surname*' would be used in formal language.



Non-native results:

The non-natives have not accepted this sentence in any situation but the rate of acceptence is still fairly high (45.8%, 37.5%, 25.0%, 37.5%). Many have commented on the mixture of expressions.

☐☐☐☐

Number 12.

Each of the children win a prize.

Native results:

The sentence is accepted in all situations. The grammar rule says that the verb should be singular ('*wins*') but native speakers seem to accept a plural verb as well. This is an example of how grammar rules and usage conflict but it also suggests that usage may change.

■■■■

Non-native results:

The sentences is rejected in every situation. In other words, the non-natives follow the grammar rule, which is also clear when looking at the comments.

☐☐☐☐

Number 13.

There were less road accidents this Christmas.

Native results:

The sentence is accepted in all situations. It seems to be a clear case. There are no comments on the sentence and the rate of acceptance is high (65.4%, 72.7%, 65.4%, 58.2%). The acceptance of the sentence in Mittins' investigation is low. The item is on 30th (of 50) place on the ranking list and the general acceptance is 35% (i.e. the sentence was rejected).

Non-native results:

The subjects have accepted the sentence in spoken and written informal language. Five people have given comments. Four of these have objected to *less* and wanted to use '*fewer*', while one has objected to '*road accidents*'.

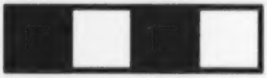
Number 14.

He is older than me.

Native results:

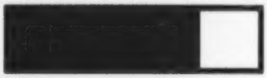
The sentence is accepted in spoken and written informal language. One would expect the sentence to be accepted in all situations, since '*older than*' *I* is regarded as hypercorrect in some grammar books.

The tested natives, however, are aware of the correct rule. There are no comments on the sentence. Mittins had approximately the same results when testing the sentence 1970. The item was accepted by 78% of the subjects in spoken informal language. The lowest rate was in written formal language (16%).



Non-native results:

The sentence is accepted in every situation but written formal. The non-natives are more tolerant than the natives in this case, though the rule is traditionally emphasized in teaching.

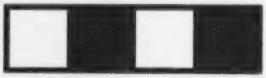


Number 15.

The process is very unique.

Native results:

This sentence has more than 50% yes-answers in spoken and written formal language. The reason for rejection in informal language is probably '*very unique*'. The native speakers would use eg. '*really great*' in informal language. The fact that the sentence is accepted in formal language shows that very together with '*unique*' is accepted. The same sentence was tested by Mittins and was rejected in all situations. The average acceptance rate was 11%, which placed the sentence on the bottom of his ranking list.



Non-native results:

The sentence is accepted in all situations but written formal. The comments show that the non-natives know that '*very*' is unnecessary.

Number 16.

This is a dangerous corner. You must go slow.

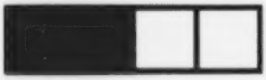
Native results:

The sentence is accepted only in spoken formal language, but the other situations do have a percentage near 50. The result is similar to the result of sentence number 7. Why would a sentence be accepted only in spoken formal language? There are no comments, which could explain the result. One explanation might be that the item actually consists of two separate sentences. One is preferable in written language (eg. *You must go slowly since the corner is dangerous.*).

There is nothing which speaks for a rejection of the form '*slowly*'. Mittins tested a similar sentence in his investigation (*That's a dangerous curve; you'd better go slow*). This sentence was restricted to informal spoken and written language and had an average acceptance of 54% in these situations.

Non-native results:

The sentence is accepted in spoken informal and formal language. The explanation to this is probably the same as above, ie. a rewriting of the two sentences to one is preferable in written language. The comments further show that the non-natives have reacted against the form '*slow*'.

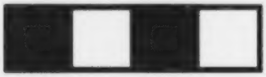


Number 17.

Womens clothes are expensive.

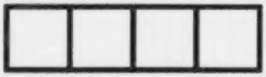
Native results:

This sentence is analysed only in written language, since one cannot hear the difference between '*womens*' and '*women's*' in spoken language. The native subjects have accepted the sentence in written informal language and the percentage in formal language is close to 50 (46.4%). The fact that a word is interpreted as genitive (because of context), though the genitive apostrophe is excluded probably affects the use of the genitive. The results here indicate that a change in the English grammar is possible. There are no comments on the sentence.



Non-native results:

The non-natives have, as expected, not accepted the sentence in any situation. The genitive rule is well established. All comments are concerned with the missing apostrophe.



Number 18.

The couple was sitting behind me.

Native results:

The sentence is accepted in spoken and written informal language. The natives have reacted against 'was' but accept the form in informal language. These subjects have not considered the sentence in the alternative meaning (*'couple'* as one of other couples), which indicates that *were* is more common.

Non-native results:

The non-natives have accepted the sentence in every situation. They have probably thought of the ambiguity of the sentence. Both *was* and *were* are mentioned in the comments.

Number 19.

None of the children was able to remember it.

Native results:

The sentence is accepted in spoken and written informal language. The students who have given comments have changed 'was' to *'were'* but most of them have still answered yes in informal language. Again an example of conflicting knowledge and usage.

Non-native results:

The sentence is accepted in all situations. The non-natives obviously accept both '*was*' and '*were*', at least if one can believe the comments.

■	■	■	■

Number 20.

They will loan you the glasses.

Native results:

The native subjects have accepted this sentence in spoken and written informal language. '*Lend*' is obviously still regarded as more correct, though the rate of acceptance is fairly high in formal situations as well (50% and 37.5%). The sentence is taken from Mittins' investigation. Mittins says (p. 104) that "our judges' reactions suggest that it may be long before 'to loan' is generally accepted". The general acceptance was 22%. With the results from this investigation in our hands we can see that it took 20 years for the item to be accepted by young people. It would be interesting to see if older people agree.

■	□	■	□

Non-native results:

The non-native subjects have not accepted this sentence. They interpret '*loan*' as a noun rather than a verb.

□	□	□	□

Number 21.

I want to apologize for not having written you before.

Native results:

This sentence is accepted only in written formal language. The explanation to this is most certainly the words in the sentence. In spoken language and written informal one would use eg. *I'm sorry I haven't written...* Since the sentence is accepted in written formal language one can assume that '*written you*', without '*to*', is accepted.

☐ ☐ ☐ ■

Non-native results:

The non-natives have not accepted the sentence in any situation. The rate of acceptance is, however, fairly high (45.8%, 50.0%, 45.8%, 37.5%). The subjects have commented on '*written you*'.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Number 22.

Television is a very popular media.

Native results:

The sentence is accepted only in written formal language, which is a most surprising result. It is obviously not '*media*', which has caused rejection in the other situations but '*television*'. The natives probably feel that '*Tv*' or '*telly*' is more appropriate in spoken language and written informal language. The reason for '*media*' being accepted in written formal language is probably that the word is often used in plural. When talking about television one tends to mention radio and newspapers at the same time ('*massmedia*').

□■□■

Non-native results:

The non-natives have accepted the sentence only in spoken informal language. All comments to the sentence are concerned with '*media*'. This shows that also non-native speakers are prepared to accept alternative forms in informal spoken language.

■□□□

Number 23.

Not only Tom but Harry are going.

Native results:

The sentence is accepted in spoken and written informal language. Some of the subjects wanted to insert '*also*' in front of Harry.

■□■□

Non-native results:

The sentence is totally rejected.

□□□□

Number 24.

Am I or you responsible?

Native results:

The natives have accepted this sentence only in spoken informal language. The sentence is perfectly correct but the natives interpret is as inappropriate.

■☐☐☐

Non-native results:

The sentence is accepted in spoken and written informal language. This indicates that the subjects know the sentence is correct but would still prefer another solution in formal language.

■☐■☐

Number 25.

I would of gone to the beach but it was too cold.

Native results:

The sentence is analysed only in written language, since it is difficult to hear the difference between '*would of*' and '*would have*' when said quickly. The natives have accepted the sentence in written informal language. A student has said in the comments: "Not correct but would be used".

■☐■☐

Non-native results:

The sentence is not accepted in any situation, which was also expected. Most of the non-natives probably regard this as totally impossible.

Ten sentences are accepted in spoken and written informal language among the native subjects. The second most frequent type of acceptance is sentences with a majority of yes-answers in spoken and written formal language (4 sentences). The non-native subjects have five sentences with majority of yes-answers in spoken and written informal language and equally many accepted in only spoken informal language. Eight sentences are rejected in all situations among the non-natives, while the native subjects have no such sentences.

Both groups of subjects have (only) two sentences which are accepted in all situations, but the sentences are different ones (12 and 13 among natives, 18 and 19 among non-natives). It is interesting to note that whereas number 12 is **accepted in all situations** among the native subjects, the same sentence is **rejected in all situations** among the non-natives. Similarly, sentence number 11 is rejected in all situations by the non-natives, while the sentence is accepted in all situations but spoken informal by the natives.

The fact that only four sentences in all are accepted in all situations proves that the subjects distinguish between the usage of English in different situations. Even non-native subjects do so, though they were thought not to.

The reactions to number 4 are very different in the two subject groups. The sentence is accepted only in spoken informal language in the non-native group but accepted only in spoken and written formal language in the native group.

The native subjects have sentences, with a majority of yes-answers in only one or two formal situations. Such sentences are not to be found among the non-native speakers. This suggests that the natives find many sentences too formal for informal situations. The reason may very well be in the artificiality of many test sentences constructed for a particular purpose.

5. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results of the investigation are affected by two major influences: the subjects and the sentences. I have already mentioned the differences between the native subjects in this investigation and the subjects of Mittins' work and the effects the differences may have on the comparison of the two works. The present comparison between native and non-native speakers is also affected to some extent by the differences in age and education of the subject groups. It would not have been impossible to find more similar subjects (e.g. students of English in Finland) but the persons tested are still considered as very suitable for the purpose. It was my intention to test very fluent non-natives with a good linguistic knowledge and natives with no particular linguistic knowledge. It was important to see whether there are differences between those who are models for other learners of English and those who use English as their mother tongue. Moreover, students will belong to the group we call the educated in a few years, which means that their attitudes will not be unimportant.

A much greater effect on the results is probably caused by the construction of the sentences. The sentences are, of course, designed to fit the test and some of them may be regarded as unnatural by the natives. It is possible that some sentences are rejected because of this rather than because the actual item is inappropriate. However, some rejections must also be due to the students' tendency to answer according to their own actual usage rather than according to **possible English usage**. Such a tendency is visible in a few comments to the sentences.

Generally speaking, the non-natives are less lenient than the natives. When more than 50% yes-answers in at least two situations is the criterion for an accepted sentence the natives have eighteen and the non-natives eleven accepted sentences. The difference between the groups is not as great as expected. The average acceptance rates are generally higher among the natives. However, surprisingly many sentences have higher acceptance rates among the non-natives than among the natives (14, 15, 18, 19, 21, 24). Particularly sentences number 18 and 19 are much more accepted among the non-natives than among the natives. These two sentences are the top two on the non-native ranking list while they are ranked 18th and 21st on the native list. The items in the sentences both pose the same question: singular or plural use of nominal? It is generally said that plural is more common in British English. The results of the groups then suggest that the British variety is preferred in New Zealand, while the non-natives accept the American usage. The non-natives probably accept both varieties because parallel usage is often taught in Finland. The majority of the New Zealanders have accepted the sentence in informal language. This points at a knowledge of both varieties.

The native attitudes were expected to depend on the four different situations, while the non-natives were expected not to change their attitudes because of situation. This hypothesis is proved right, though the fact that the yes-answers are fairly equally distributed in the four situations indicates that language usage does not differ as much as expected in different situations. Both groups do have more yes-answers in the informal situations than in the formal ones but the yes-answers are not concentrated around the spoken situations as expected. This suggests that it is the degree of formality that determines the usage rather than the means of transmission.

Sentences number 1, 2, 4, 7, 10 and 21 are traditionally classified as Americanisms. How do the New Zealanders look upon these items? When looking at the native average rates of acceptance we notice that all of the sentences have fairly high rates. Only number 21 has an acceptance percentage under 50. All sentences, except for 21, belong to the top thirteen on the native ranking list. This suggests that the Americanisms are accepted to a great extent in New Zealand. When the different situations are looked at more closely one is struck by the fact that three of these five sentences have a higher rate of acceptance in formal language than in informal. Are Americanisms regarded as formal in New Zealand? The answer must be no. It is more likely that the actual construction of the sentence is regarded as unnatural in informal language. The acceptance in formal situations must be interpreted as approval of the items in any situation. There is, however, one other possible explanation of the results. The subjects consider anything they would not use themselves as acceptable but formal.

One could expect the non-natives to reject the Americanisms since British English is the most common variety of English taught in Finland. Sentences numbered 4, 7 and 10 have fairly low rates of acceptance (28.1%, 20.6% and 17.7%) but sentences 1, 2 and 21 show results similar to the native ones. The reason for this must be that nowadays it is emphasized that one can choose between American and British English. It is also very often pointed out that one should be consistent in usage. These results, with Americanisms accepted also by New Zealanders, support an idea that it is impossible to be consistent, since what is labelled as American usage is not used only in America.

Only one Americanism (number 2) is included in Mittins' investigation. The sentence had a general acceptance of 12% 1970. The corresponding figure among the natives in this investigation is 56.8%. Mittins has mentioned that the students, who were regarded as the most favourably-disposed group, showed a general acceptance of 50% of the sentence in informal situations while they rejected it in the formal ones. The New Zealanders also had a higher per cent of acceptance in the informal situations but the rates were fairly high in the two formal situations as well.

Other sentences included in both investigations are: 8, 13, 14, 15 and 20. Mittins made a ranking list of 50 sentences according to average acceptance rate. All common sentences are placed towards the bottom of the list in Mittins' investigation. Number 14 is most accepted among these sentences (place 21/50) with an average acceptance of 42%. The same sentence is in third place in the present investigation with an average acceptance of 62.5%. In fact all common sentences are much more accepted by the New Zealanders than by Mittins' subjects. A comparison can be made in table 7.

Table 7.
Average acceptance + ranking of common sentences 1970 and 1991 (native subjects).

Sentence:	**1970 %**	**Ranking**	**1991 %**	**Ranking**
Number 2	12	48/50	56.8	10/25
Number 8	14	47/50	52.2	13/25
Number 13	37	30/50	65.4	1/25
Number 14	42	21/50	62.5	3/25
Number 15	11	50/50	59.9	6/25
Number 20	22	43/50	56.2	11/25

The table clearly shows that the sentences are more accepted now than twenty years ago. This is, of course, not only due to the years that have passed between the two investigations. The age difference of the subjects must have an effect on the results. Mittins noticed that the students in his investigation were more lenient than the rest of the subjects. Since all subjects in the present investigation were students one can presume that the average per centage of acceptance is higher than it would be with subjects from all age groups.

It might also be argued that the regional differences play a great role in the differences between the investigations. It is true that there are differences between New Zealand English and British English. How much this may have affected the results is impossible to say unless a specific comparison between the two varieties is made. It is possible that the New Zealanders are generally more lenient and more influenced by e.g. American English than the British. This is supported to some extent by the fairly high rates of acceptance of the Americanisms in the investigation.

Still, I would like to suggest that the sentences are more acceptable today than twenty years ago not only because the subjects are different but also because the attitudes to usage in general have changed. This suggestion is partly based on the non-native results. Even these subjects have higher rates of acceptance of the common sentences than Mittins' subjects showed.

The most obvious differences between the native and the non-native subjects are:

1. The natives have more accepted sentences (18) than the non-natives (11).
2. The non-natives have nine totally rejected sentences, while the natives lack such results.
3. The majority of the sentences are accepted in the two informal situations and rejected in the two formal situations among the natives. The most common type of reaction among the non-natives is rejection of sentence in all situations.
4. The natives have many sentences which are accepted in the formal situations but not in the informal ones. The non-natives lack such results.

The natives are without doubt more willing to accept questionable usage. What consequences do these results have on English language teaching in our schools then? Today, when the importance of languages is repeatedly being emphasized, it is of greatest importance that teachers of English (and any other language) thoroughly consider the needs of the students and the teaching goals. The main goal must be to prepare the students for contact with the target language society. This idea is included in the curriculum for English language teaching in comprehensive schools but it is my fear that the main goals are sometimes forgotten because of more typically short-range goals such as examinations.

English language teaching in Finnish schools generally aim at a communicative approach. Language teaching should be aimed at giving the students:

- a basic oral and written proficiency of English in **everyday situations**.

- knowledge of life and culture in the English speaking world.
- a basis for continued studies.

According to recommendations from The Council of Europe the communicative approach should be the dominant method in language teaching from 1992 onwards. This means that more than ever communicative competence must be the goal of language teaching. What does it mean to have communicative competence? It means being able to handle unexpected situations, react when spoken to and give a suitable answer on questions. On the whole it means being **on the same level as the native speaker**. If these are the characteristics of communicative competence then native speakers must be the main models for English language teaching. I am not suggesting that only native speakers are qualified as teachers but non-native teachers must constantly be aware of what is current among natives. For this purpose regular reports are needed - something for native scholars to start working on.

The results of the native attitudes also give rise to another important question; What is standard English? Collins and Cobuild *Dictionary of English Language* (p. 1421) gives the definition: "**standard** is used to describe spelling, pronunciation, grammar etc. which is generally regarded as correct or acceptable". The question is: regarded as correct or acceptable **by whom**? Often various grammars are the only sources where you can find out what is regarded as correct. But how can authors of grammars have the authority to decide what is right and wrong? Many claim that standard English is what the educated community of English speakers regard as correct and accepted. I am prepared to suggest that standard English must be what the majority of the English speakers regard as accepted. More investigations among native speakers are needed in order to get **current** normative sources.

Few have dared to question the expediency of standard English (when used as meaning grammatical according to the educated) in

English language teaching. L.M. Goldstein has called one of her articles *Standard English: The Only Target for Nonnative Speakers of English?* (1987) In this article she presents the results of an investigation done among non-native youngsters in New York. She objects to studying non-native speakers' language in comparison with standard English. Learning a second language is closely connected to identification and many non-native speakers deliberately choose the nonstandard variety of the language. Goldstein advises teachers to remember that standard language may not be the target for all students. It is the teachers' task to help the students determine whether standard English will be necessary in their lives or not. This report supports the idea put forward in the present investigation; a movement towards native speakers' **actual** usage in language teaching.

> "The whole trend in our society has been towards a welcome acquaintance with cultural relativity - which means overcoming the impulse to thank God that we are not as other men are. It is high time that we caught up with this trend in our view of language as well, so that a realistic, tolerant perspective can replace the naive idiocies and cruel bigotries to which we are still prone".
>
> R Quirk: (*The English Language and Images of Matter*, 1972)

6. CONCLUSION.

The main purpose of this investigation was to filla gap in an area where little has been done; to compare attitudes to usage among native and non-native speakers of English. It was suggested that attitudes are possible parts of language proficiency to take into consideration when trying to determine non-native persons' degree of nativeness.

The investigation was done with a questionnaire consisting of twenty-five English sentences. Subjects from New Zealand and Finland considered the sentences in four situations; informal spoken language, formal spoken language, informal written language and formal written language.

The hypothesis was that the non-natives would not reach a native level in the test, i.e. that their attitudes would be very different. The hypothesis was based on the non-natives' way of learning English, i.e. in a non-English speaking environment, and their limited opportunities to get in contact with English in natural situations. The non-native subjects are very fluent in English and have a professional knowledge of linguistics. But their English usage is mostly restricted to fairly formal situations. This was expected to cause less acceptance of the sentences than among the natives.

When all yes-answers were counted the natives proved to be more lenient than the non-natives. The native subjects had a majority of yes-answers, while the non-native subjects had a majority of no-answers. The difference between the subjects' answers in different situations was not as great as expected. Both groups had more yes-answers in the informal situation than in the formal ones. However, the differences between the situations appeared to be more obvious among the non-natives . Since this was totally against the hypothesis, the types of answers were analyzed before any conclusions were drawn.

These results proved that 56% of the native answers were of the type two yes- and two no-answers. The majority (43%) of the non-native answers was of the type four yes- or no-answers, i.e. the same answer in all four situations. The natives thus change their usage according to the situation.

In order to classify the sentences as accepted or rejected it was decided that the criteria for an accepted sentence was more than 50% yes-answers in at least two situations. The natives had eighteen accepted sentences and the non-natives had eleven. The difference here is insignificant. The most striking difference between the subject groups was that as many as nine sentences were totally rejected (no situation with more than 50% yes) by the non-natives, while the natives had no such sentences.

In order to rank the sentences an average acceptance rate was established. The ranking lists of the two groups were fairly different, with some sentences on totally different ends of the lists. The natives generally showed higher rates but there are examples were the non-natives have higher rates.

The Americanisms included in the investigation suggested that the non-natives prefer the British variety of English. The natives did not object to the items but probably to the constructions of the sentences. This is proved by the tendency to accept the sentences more in the formal situations than in the informal ones.

A few sentences were borrowed from Mittins' questionnaire in order to compare his subjects and the native subjects of the present investigation. It was believed that the sentences would be more accepted today than twenty years ago. This was proved to be a correct hypothesis. The average acceptance rates among the New Zealanders were much higher than among Mittins' subjects. The reason for this must be partly the differences in age and nationality between the subjects, but it is also evident that English is moving towards more flexibility.

In conclusion, there are differences between native and non-native speakers of English. The differences are small in general but when looking at each sentence separately the differences are more obvious. The last chapter of the work included a discussion of how these results affect English language teaching and it was stated that teachers ought to keep in regular contact with the English speaking world in order to follow the native speakers' attitudes to usage. This is important when language teaching is aiming at communicative competence. More research is needed to produce current reports on native attitudes and usage.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Albert, M.L. & Obler, L. (1978).	*The Bilingual Brain.* New York: Academic Press.
Christophersen, P & Sandved, A. (1969).	*An Advanced English Grammar.* London: Macmillan.
Christophersen, P. (1988).	Native Speakers and World English. *English Today 15.* IV: 3.
Collins Cobuild (1990).	*English Grammar.* London: Collins.
Collins Cobuild (1987).	*English Language Dictionary.* London: Collins.
Cummins, J. et al. (1984).	Linguistic Interdependence Among Japanese and Vietnamese Immigrant Students. In C. Rivera (ed.), *Communicative Competence Approaches to Language. Proficiency Assessment: Research and Application.* Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters.
Deverson, T. (1991).	New Zealand English Lexis: The Maori Dimension. *English Today* 26: 7,2.
Goldstein, LM. (1987).	Standard English: The Only Target For Nonnative Speakers of English? *TESOL Q 21: 3*, 417-436.
Greenbaum, S. & Quirk, R. (1970).	*Elicitation Experiments in English. Linguistic studies in Use and Attitude.* London: Longman.

Hammerly, H. (1991).	*Fluency and Accuracy.* Clevedon, Avon. : Multilingual Matters.
Lantolf, J. P. & Frawley, W. (1988).	Proficiency. Understanding the Construct, *SSLA 10.* 181 -195.
Lehiste, I (1971).	Grammatical Variability and the Difference Between Native and Non-Native Speakers. In *Nickel, G.* (ed.) *Papers in Contrastive Linguistics.* Cambridge: University Press, 69-73.
Heaton, J.B. & Turton, N.D. (1989).	*Longman Dictionary of Common Errors.* Essex: Longman.
Mittins, W.H. et al. (1970).	*Attitudes to English Usage.* London: Oxford University Press.
Quirk, R. (1972).	*The English Language and Images of Matter.* London: Oxford University Press.
Quirk, R. (1990).	Language Varieties and Standard Language, *English Today 21*: 6,1.
Quirk, R. (1962).	*The Use of English.* London: Edward Arnold.
Quirk, R., Greenbaum, S., Leech, G., Svartvik, J. (1972).	*A Grammar of Contemporary English.* London: Longman.
Svartvik, J. & Sager, O. (1977).	*Engelsk universitetsgrammatik.* Uppsala: Esselte Studium.
van Els, T. et al. (1984).	*Applied Linguistics and the Learning and Teaching of Foreign Languages.* Suffolk: Edward Arnold.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. Questions designed for native speakers

1. Is English your first language? Yes / No
2. Do you speak any other language? Yes / No
   List other languages (if any).
3. Age (in years)
4. Sex Female / Male
5. Years of Secondary schooling.
6. Years of Tertiary education.
7. Which degree are you enrolled in?
8. What is (or will be) your main subject(s) at University?

APPENDIX.2
Questions designed for non-native speakers

1. What is your mother tongue?
2. What is your academic degree?
3. What is your present occupation?
4. At what age did you spend more than six weeks in an English speaking country for the first time?
5. Have you lived more than one year in an English speaking country? No/Yes For how long?
6. When did you last spend more than six weeks in an English speaking country?
7. Do you use English in your daily life? (Spoken and written language) Never / Seldom / Quite often / Very often
8. How much of the literature you read (articles, non-fiction, fiction etc.) is written in English? (%)
9. If you teach in English, which grammar book(s) do you normally use?

APPENDIX 3. The questionnaire.

The questionnaire consists of 25 sentences with four statements for each. Please read each statement and answer Yes (Y) or No (N) in the sections. The statements to consider are:

1. The sentence is appropriate in **informal spoken language:**
2. The sentence is appropriate in **formal sooken language:**
3. The sentence is appropriate in **informal written language:**
4. The sentence is appropriate in **formal written language.**

Note that you are to consider each statement for each sentence.

Comments on the sentences can be written on the lines provided under each sentence.

Thank you for your co-operation.

		SPOKEN		WRITTEN	
		informal	formal	informal	formal
1.	In case you need any information, please contact me.				
2.	It looked like it would rain.				
3.	She was bored of talking to him.				
4.	I have been playing piano since I was a child.				

	SPOKEN		WRITTEN	
	informal	formal	informal	formal
5. The commonest car is Toyota. ______________________________				
6. The reason why I bought the car was because I thought it was cheap. ______________________________				
7. The magazine has a hundred fifty pages. ______________________________				
8. We met up with him at the zoo. ______________________________				
9. Have you any coffee? ______________________________				
10. My new school was very different than the old one. ______________________________				
11. According to Henry's opinion, less money should be spent on weapons. ______________________________				
12. Each of the children win a prize. ______________________________				

		SPOKEN		WRITTEN	
		informal	formal	informal	formal
13.	There were less road accidents this Christmas. ____________________				
14.	He is older than me. ____________________				
15.	The process is very unique. ____________________				
16.	This is a dangerous corner. You must go slow. ____________________				
17.	Womens clothes are expensive. ____________________				
18.	The couple was sitting behind me. ____________________				
19.	None of the children was able to remember it. ____________________				
20.	They will loan you the glasses. ____________________				
21.	I want to apologize for not having written you before. ____________________				

	SPOKEN		WRITTEN	
	informal	formal	informal	formal
22. Television is a very popular media. ____________________				
23. Not only Tom but Harry are going. ____________________				
24. Am I or you responsible? ____________________				
25. I would of gone to the beach but it was too cold. ____________________				

Tove Söderman

WORD ASSOCIATIONS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS AND NATIVE SPEAKERS

- The Phenomenon of a Shift in Respose Type and its Relevance for Lexical Development

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 94

1. INTRODUCTION 95

2. BACKGROUND OF THE INVESTIGATION 98
   - 2.1. The Development of Word Association Research 98
   - 2.2. Basic Studies of Response Type in the Word Associations of Native Speakers and Foreign Language Learners 101
     - 2.2.1. Changes in the Word Associations of Native Speakers 102
     - 2.2.2. Response Types in the Word Associations of Foreign Language Learners 105
   - 2.3. Points of Commonality and Difference between the Word Associations of Native Speakers and Foreign Language Learners 107

3. AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION 108

4. EXPERIMENT 1 -Changing Patterns of Response Type in the Word Associations of Foreign Language Learners 109
   - 4.1. Specific Hypotheses 110
   - 4.2. Subjects 110
   - 4.3. Overall Design of the Word Association Test 111
   - 4.4. Test Material 112
   - 4.5. Administrative Procedures 114
   - 4.6. Method of Scoring - Classification of Response Type 117
   - 4.7. Statistical Analysis 120
   - 4.8. Test Results 121

5. THEORETICAL DISCUSSION 125

6. EXPERIMENT 2 -The Responses of Adult Native Speakers and Advanced Learners to Frequent and Infrequent Words 132
   - 6.1. Specific Hypotheses 133

6.2. Subjects 133
6.3. Test Material 137
6.4. Administrative Procedures 139
6.5. Method of Scoring and Statistical Analysis 141
6.6. Test Results 142

7. THEORETICAL DISCUSSION CONTINUED 145

8. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH 153

BIBLIOGRAPHY 158

APPENDICES

-Experiment 1

1. Instructions 163
2. Stimulus Words 164
3. Table 1 - Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic Responses 166
4. Tables 2 & 3 - Clang Associates and "Other" Responses 167
5. Clang Responses - 7th Graders 168
6. Clang Resposnes - "Gymnasium" Pupils 170
7. Clang Responses - First-year University Students 172
8. Clang Responses - Advanced Students 174

-Experiment 2

9. Rate of Frequency for the Stimulus Words 175
10. Stimulus Words 176
11. Table 6 - Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic Responses 177
12. Table 7 - Unusual Responses 178
13. Clang Responses - Native Speakers 179
14. Clang Responses - Advanced Learners 180
15. Cases of Misinterpreted Stimulus Words 181

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I largely owe the present outlook of this thesis to the privilege I had of spending some time at Birkbeck College, London University in May 1987 and at the University College of Swansea in November 1991. During these periods of time I not only had access to some of the world's best libraries but I also received some invaluable advice and friendly support from Dr. Paul Meara. I am also most grateful to him for the research training I have received as a member of the Swansea Vocabulary Research Group and for being given the opportunity to take part in the Research Seminars held in Cardiff in Spring 1992. I also wish to thank Paul for providing me with the native speaker material required for one of my experiments and for allowing me to run his computerized vocabulary tests. Last but not least, I want to thank my supervisor Håkan Ringbom, who made all this possible and who was always willing to support and advise me throughout my work.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the late 1970's and early 1980's, lexical development particularly in a foreign or second language was still referred to as "a neglected aspect of language learning" (Levenston, 1979:1). Whereas studies of syntax and phonology have occupied researchers for decades, lexical development has only recently grown into a major area of research. In many respects, though, this research is still much in its infancy. Compared to the domains of syntax and phonology that of vocabulary seems less tangible. In fact, foreign language students even at an advanced level often mention vocabulary as their greatest source of difficulty. This should make lexical development an area not only of particular interest but also of high priority.

The present investigation will concern lexical development in English both as a native and a foreign language. An attempt will be made to find out to what extent lexical development is fundamentally similar in a language whether it is learnt as an L1 or an L2. In fact, this may prove a promising approach as recent years have seen an increasing interest in parallels between L1 and L2 as far as syntactic development is concerned. It may be worth considering to what extent such parallels extend also to lexical development. The basic question underlying this study has been clearly formulated by Meara (1982): **What does the learner's mental lexicon look like, how does it develop and in what respects is it similar to or different from that of a monolingual native speaker?** In an effort to answer this question, at least some of the processes underlying the development of the mental lexicon must be explored.

There is so far little specific knowledge of what would be an optimal way of gaining access to the learner's developing word store. The word association test, however, which has served a variety of purposes during the years, has turned out to be a useful tool for collecting data about the mental lexicon. With the help of word association procedures I, therefore, intend to approach the subject. More specifically, the phenomenon of **a shift in response type** and its relation to lexical development will be explored. Briefly, the syntagmatic - paradigmatic shift, as this phenomenon is usually called, refers to the observation that adult native speakers tend to produce a predominance of paradigmatic responses in word association whereas the pattern observed for young children is still dominated by syntagmatic and clang responses.

Most studies of response type in word association have been restricted to native speaker data though foreign language data may be assumed to be at least as illuminating. An issue of central importance for this study is, therefore, the extent to which also foreign language learners of English show a similar shift in their word associations. This was tested by presenting groups of non-native subjects representing different levels of proficiency with a similar set of words as that used with native speakers, i.e. a set of fairly frequent English words. My intention is now to relate these and other findings to a framework of lexical development. Above all, I expect to find some clues as to whether the development of words in the mental lexicon follows similar paths for both native and non-native speakers of English.

Some additional experimental data will also be included to test my assumption that a shift in response type is not only a function of age and language proficiency, as has often been claimed, but also of the particular stimulus words tested. For this purpose an equal number of English native speakers and very advanced learners of English were tested on a set of both very frequent and relatively infrequent words. Not only could these data throw new light on the nature and origin of a shift in response type. They could also serve the purpose of showing to what extent the association patterns of speakers with near-native proficiency in English differ from the responses given by native speakers. The study will also incorporate a critical discussion of previous attempts to relate the phenomenon of a shift in response type to linguistic development. Finally, some implications of this investigation for vocabulary teaching will be briefly considered.

I am well aware of the complexity of the subject and of the fact that word associations can be mere reflections of lexical development, and this only to a limited extent. Since this investigation only concentrates on a specific aspect of learners' and native speakers' word associations as potentially indicative of lexical development, it cannot possibly result in an all-embracing theory of lexical development. It can only try to pin down some of the basic principles governing the development of the mental lexicon. However, no single unitary theory of vocabulary development seems to exist. Nor is there an optimal method of gaining access to the lexicon of a language learner. Therefore, any serious attempt at a closer understanding of this lexicon should be considered a potentially important step forward.

As for the structure of this thesis, the following chapter will provide a background of the investigation. After a brief review of the change in theory and thought within the field of word association research, some basic findings on response type are presented together with theory when this is available. This is followed by a more detailed introduction of the present investigation in Chapter three. Chapter four is an account of the first experimental part of the study and contains methodological issues as well as test results. The main theoretical discussion follows in Chapter five, where aims and hypotheses are related to the test results obtained. This discussion leads on to the second experiment, which is dealt with in Chapters six and seven. The outcome of this experiment is discussed in the light of the theoretical framework presented in Chapter five. Finally, the eighth and last chapter contains some concluding remarks as well as some implications for further research.

2. BACKGROUND OF THE INVESTIGATION

2.1. The Development of Word Association Research

The study of associative behaviour has got a long and interesting history, which dates as far back as the philosophers of ancient Greece (Deese, 1965:1). Also the free association test has been used for centuries and is still the principal method for eliciting associations. The technique itself is very simple. A subject is required to say the first thing that comes into his mind when presented with a stimulus. Today the procedure is often restricted to single words as stimuli and responses. This method, which was first developed by Galton in the 19th century, is what we today call the word association test. A more detailed description of the modern word association experiment is to be found in Chapter four. It is worth noting that since Galton the field of word association research has seen a remarkable change in the use of word associations as well as a change in theory and thought.

Originally, word associations were used mainly as a means of investigating how ideas were associated and changing in people's minds. The theoretical background of such an approach was the classical association theory, which has been highly influential also in subsequent word association research. According to this theory, the production of word associations is determined by the laws of contiguity, frequency and similarity (Deese, 1965:1f.). The law of contiguity, which is known as the chief law of association, is a principle of temporal order. It relies on the sequential nature of events characterizing human experience and entails the view that one thought leads to another. Any idea is thought to be caused by a preceding idea or at least connected to it in some way. Thus, two words or ideas would become associated when encountered in temporal contiguity.

Unlike the law of contiguity, the other propositions of the theory have often got the status of secondary laws of association, principles which simply derive from the law of contiguity. Still, the principle of frequency is important in claiming that the strength of associations depends on the frequency with which two or several ideas have been connected in the past. According to this, responses given in a word association task would consist of words that the subjects have frequently encountered in connection with the words used as stimuli. No less important is the principle of similarity, which accounts for the fact that elements can also be combined simultaneously in experience rather than always in succession.

It was within the fields of psychology and philosophy that the foundations of classical association theory were laid and word associations first found a field of application. Since verbal behaviour is still often viewed as the chief mediator of thought, even contemporary psychologists have taken interest in the relationship between linguistic associations and thought. They, too, have mainly treated word associations as a function of contiguity (Clark, 1970:272). Since the time, however, when the preoccupations of word association research were still within this sphere of interest, new aims and theories have gradually emerged.

A whole new area opened when a large number of linguists and psycholinguists took an interest in word associations hoping to learn more about verbal learning and verbal behaviour with their help. Like many psychologists, they found the fact that certain stimuli seemed to evoke similar responses from large groups of subjects to be useful for their purposes. For years there was a general concern with counting the relative frequencies of associates in specific groups of subjects and compiling frequency tables of associates. These frequency tables have been used for studies of associational stereotypy in intralingual as well as interlingual conditions. Due to the very fact that the responses given to ordinary stimuli show a high degree of commonality and unoriginality, word associations turned out to be of limited value within the field of psychoanalysis. There was a time, however, when they were believed to be useful in diagnosing psychiatric disorders. In fact, the image of word association tests as a link to the subconscious is widely prevalent today in addition to their long and respectable history with application to quite normal people and the purely linguistic aspects of associative behaviour (Meara, 1978:1).

Due to the strongly rooted influence of the law of contiguity, the structure of associations remained a neglected aspect of word association for quite a long time. This is no longer the case as it has become clear that the associations in language and thought have to be more highly organized than classical association theory seems to allow. This directional change in the field of word association research took place as late as the early 1960's. It mainly resulted in various efforts to classify associations and develop theoretical explanations of associative structures. It was in this context that the position of word associations was established as a means of investigating linguistic development, lexical development in particular. In fact, this is the purpose for which word associations have turned out to be particularly useful. Attention has mainly been paid to the semantic relations between stimuli and responses.

The earliest and most familiar of the classifications based upon a logical structure of relations is that which divides associations into superordinates, subordinates and co-ordinates. Related to this is the method of classification which divides associations into two main categories, syntagmatic and paradigmatic associations. This has been the most widely used method up to the present day and it will form the framework also of this study. A syntagmatic response is associated with the stimulus by contiguity in a sentence and, therefore, as a rule belongs to a form class different from the stimulus word. A paradigmatic association, on the other hand, generally belongs to the same form class as the stimulus and could often function as a substitute for the stimulus in a sentence.

Since the 1960's much interest has been directed towards the proportion of syntagmatic and paradigmatic responses in the word associations obtained from children and adults. Numerous attempts have been made to find out when the shift from syntagmatic to paradigmatic responses is likely to take place and what its relation to linguistic or cognitive development is. Different theoretical explanations of the syntagmatic - paradigmatic shift have been proposed and new theories of word association have evolved beside the previously prominent classical association theory (Nelson, 1977:93).

Recently, there has been a revival of interest in the use of word associations, particularly as a tool for investigating the properties of the developing mental lexicon. Some attention is now being paid also to the word associations of foreign language learners and the way in which they are similar to or different from those of native speakers. This is something that the present study is particularly interested in and which could bring the syntagmatic - paradigmatic shift into new light.

2.2. Basic Studies of Response Type in the Word Associations of Native Speakers and Foreign Language Learners

Even though the syntagmatic - paradigmatic shift has been in the focus of continuing research for decades, the highly relevant issue of whether also the word associations of foreign language learners undergo a shift in response type has been largely neglected. Until the end of the 1980's there were only a few small-scale studies of learners' word associations, and they dealt with the issue only to a very limited extent. A more comprehensive study of the subject was undertaken by the present author in 1988. Before turning to this study, however, it is worth taking a brief look at a few other studies relevant to the subject including both native speaker and learner research. This will not only provide us with important evidence of a changing pattern of response type for native speakers but will also make the approach and viewpoints of this investigation more understandable.

2.2.1. Changes in the Word Associations of Native Speakers

Since the first experiments on changes in the word associations of native speakers it has been noticed that the associations of adults differ markedly from those of children. Normal adults tend to produce two main types of associations, syntagmatic and paradigmatic ones. However, they have been found to produce the latter type in preference to the former, at least as long as the stimuli are made up of fairly frequent words (Meara, 1982:30). Young children, on the other hand, seem to prefer syntagmatic responses, at least until the age of seven. This is the time when the syntagmatic - paradigmatic shift has been assumed to take place.

It is important to note that children have also been found to produce a large number of clang associates in addition to syntagmatic responses. A clang associate is a response which is phonetically related to the stimulus word but which bears no obvious semantic relation to it (Meara, 1980:235). Unfortunately, this significant property of children's word associations is only briefly commented on in most studies. Attention has usually been paid only to the two main response categories despite the fact that a reduction in the number of clang associates has been assumed to take place in connection with a shift from syntagmatic to paradigmatic responses.

In the following sections, some of the most relevant studies with evidence of a shift in response type for native speakers will be reviewed. Much of the research which is cited today dates back to the sixties and seventies when the most comprehensive work in the field was published. Since then nothing much has happened in the field and it is obvious that at least the theories attached to the syntagmatic - paradigmatic shift need revision.

Word Associations of English Native Speakers as Examined and Interpreted by Ervin

Ervin's study of 1961 is an early but still most essential part of the research on changes in the word associations of native speakers. The changes she examined were an increase in paradigmatic responses, a decrease in syntagmatic responses and a reduction in the number of clang associates.

Ervin points out that even the isolated words in a word association task have been encountered in context before. A paradigmatic response would, therefore, arise through similarity of past verbal contexts with the stimulus word. By contextual similarity she understands grammatical as well as semantic similarity between stimuli and responses. According to Ervin, paradigmatic responses can be expected for stimulus words which the language learner has encountered in a variety of contexts. This would reduce the number of strong competing syntagmatic associates. As for syntagmatic associations, they would dominate only as long as the learner possesses limited knowledge of the contextual variety of the stimulus words. With age, however, sentences increase in length and become more varied, which would reduce the strength of syntagmatic associations. As the child's vocabulary gets larger and his ability to produce synonyms and antonyms develops, also his reliance upon clang associates would get weaker.

Ervin further claims that the shift towards paradigmatic responding with age and language experience is also conditioned by the properties of the form class of the stimulus word. Consequently, there would be an earlier shift for words which frequently occupy the final position in a sentence. This would be the case with nouns, adjectives and intransitive verbs. On the other hand, adverbs of frequency, transitive verbs and question words, which occur less frequently in final position, would tend to elicit syntagmatic associations at later ages than other categories.

As informants in the study Ervin used four groups of subjects, children from kindergarten, the first, third and sixth grades. They were all presented with a word list consisting of 46 stimulus words.

Most associations of the kindergarten children turned out to be syntagmatic and there was a significant increase in paradigmatic responding with age. As expected, however, there was a tendency for nouns and adjectives to show an earlier paradigmatic dominance than many transitive verbs and adverbs. The results also gave evidence of the expected decrease in the average number of clang associates per child. These changes Ervin then explained in terms of an increase in the number and variety of sentential contexts for words with increasing age and language experience.

Additional Evidence as well as Further Theoretical Interpretations of a Shift in Response Type for Native Speakers

Similar results to those reported by Ervin have also been presented by Brown and Berko (1960). They examined the phenomenon by giving a set of 36 high-frequency words of various form classes to four groups of subjects, first, second, and third grade students plus an adult sample. The test results showed a consistent trend towards paradigmatic responding across all groups and all categories. Again, there was a somewhat earlier shift for nouns.

Unlike Ervin, Brown and Berko explained the shift in terms of syntactic development rather than lexical development. A shift in response type would mainly be related to the child's developing awareness of the different parts of speech. Nevertheless, this explanation has been criticized on the grounds that children have been found to use form class appropriately already by the age of four (Nelson, 1977:95).

Important data on changing patterns of response type have been presented also by Entwisle (1966). These extensive developmental data showed that especially for adjective and verb stimuli the proportion of paradigmatic responses was much higher among older children than among young children. Similar results were obtained also in a later study by Palermo (1971).

Apart from the theories by Ervin and Brown and Berko, there are also more recent interpretations of the syntagmatic - paradigmatic shift. Mc Neill (1970), in particular, proposed a theory of semantic development for the lexicon, which explains the shift in terms of an increased knowledge of the semantic features of words with age. The theory assumes that each lexical item can be specified by features that determine both its meaning and its syntactic use. Examples of such features are: common noun, physical object, living, small and plant. Children, however, would not learn all the features associated with a lexical item when first acquiring it. Only gradually would they build up their feature entries. When knowledge of all the features of a word is available to an individual, that word and its associates would share a maximum number of features. Such responses would be called paradigmatic.

Variations and generalizations of this theory have also been proposed. Even purely cognitive theories of a shift in response type have evolved in the course of time. In fact, there is still no general agreement on the factors influencing this shift. Therefore, the validity of the above theories is a matter which will be discussed in a later context.

2.2.2 Response Types in the Word Associations of Foreign Language Learners

The findings of a shift in response type for native speakers have naturally raised some interest also in the word association behaviour of foreign language learners. Still, apart from two studies by Politzer (1978) and Meara (1978) surprisingly little has been published in this field.

The aim of both these studies was to find out whether there is a tendency for early L2-learners to produce syntagmatic responses and clang associates like young children learning their mother tongue, or whether a typically "adult" response pattern dominates from very early in the learning process (Meara, 1980:194).

Politzer's word association data were collected from a group of foreign language learners of French. These subjects were first asked to give associations to a set of 20 French words. Two days later they were asked to produce responses to the equivalent English words. The purpose of this was to examine to what extent the students' ratio of syntagmatic to paradigmatic responses differed in their native language English and their foreign language French.

The data in hand suggested a picture of heavily unbalanced bilingualism in that there was a much stronger dominance of paradigmatic responses in the subjects' native language English. Consequently, the large number of syntagmatic responses in French supported the original hypothesis that syntagmatic associations would dominate in the initial phases of foreign language learning.

In two of his papers (1978, 1982), Meara discusses general differences between the word associations of foreign language learners and native speakers. These papers also contain information on response type. Some interesting data were collected in 1978 when a group of French learners, who were only moderately proficient in the language, were presented with the standard word association test, the Kent-Rosanoff word list. For this particular list, adult norms in English, German and French as well as a number of other languages are available (Postman & Keppel, 1970). On the basis of these norms, the learner responses were grouped into the following categories:

(a) responses being the same as those reported for native speakers,
(b) responses not normally made by French speakers, and
(c) totally unfrench associations.

These responses were also classified as syntagmatic, paradigmatic or clang associates.

The responses in categories (a) and (b) turned out to be basically uninteresting. Even though the learner responses were essentially the same as those of native speakers, they were simply translation equivalents of the corresponding English responses rather than genuine French associations. Surprisingly large, however, was the third category, which consisted of clang associates and responses which were due to the stimulus word having been misunderstood. These discrepancies between foreign language learners and adult native speaker norms would suggest that early learners of a foreign language do resemble children learning their mother tongue. Still, the number of syntagmatic responses was smaller than expected among the learners. This was thought to be a result of the fact that only the three most frequent responses were analysed. According to Meara, at least the number of clang associates would have been larger if all responses had been analysed. The adult native norms, however, only include a minimal number of clang associates and, generally speaking, also a strong paradigmatic dominance. This led Meara to conclude that there are obvious discrepancies between the association patterns of learners and adult native speakers. He also suggested there be parallels for lexical development between foreign language learners and children acquiring their mother tongue. However, this issue was not further explored in the study.

2.3. Points of Commonality and Difference between the Word Associations of Native Speakers and Foreign Language Learners

When the word associations of early learners of a foreign language have been compared to those of adult native speakers, obvious differences between the two groups have been reported. Instead of producing large numbers of paradigmatic responses like adult native speakers, learners seem more inclined to produce syntagmatic and clang responses. On the basis of these findings it has been customary to claim that similarities in the word associations of L1- and L2-speakers are mainly to be found between foreign language learners and children acquiring their mother tongue. However, more recent inquiries into the subject suggest that this need not always be the case. This is a highly relevant issue, which will be dealt with in subsequent chapters.

3. AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The present investigation aims at shedding some light on the elusive question of what the learner's mental lexicon looks like, how it develops and in what ways it is similar to or different from the lexicon of a monolingual native speaker. In an attempt to answer this question, the following objectives were set up for the investigation:

1) to present some evidence of a shift in response type for foreign language learners and to relate these findings to corresponding native speaker data.

2) to discuss both the learner and the native speaker data within a framework of lexical development. In particular, the idea will be proposed that lexical development is fundamentally similar in a language whether it is learnt as a native or a foreign language.

3) to present some new learner and native speaker data in order to test my assumption that a shift in response type is not only a function of age or language proficiency as has often been claimed. These data are also expected to yield important information on the extent to which the response patterns of people with almost native proficiency in English differ from those of native speakers.

A series of word association experiments were carried out in order to find out whether foreign language learners of English give evidence of similar changes in their word associations as native speakers. Associations to 100 frequent English words were collected from four groups of learners representing different levels of proficiency. This experiment is part of a previous study (Söderman,1988, 1989)[1]. However, in order to challenge the common assumption that a shift in response type is simply a matter of age and language proficiency, an equal number of native speakers and very proficient learners of English were confronted with **both** very frequent **and** relatively infrequent words.

---

[1] The experiment was first incorporated in my M.A. thesis from 1988. An article based on this thesis was published in 1989.

I believe this kind of information can bring us closer to an understanding of what principles govern lexical development in a native and a foreign language. Even today, response type is an aspect of learners' word associations which has not been thoroughly investigated though some interesting data were presented in the late 1970's and early 1980's. However, those studies are based on data from a single group of subjects and include hardly any theoretical discussion of the findings. Consequently, the justification for undertaking this investigation lies in its broader scope than previous L2-research on response type. Not only will learners at different levels of proficiency be involved. An attempt will also be made to relate the findings of learners and native speakers to a framework of lexical development. This investigation is likely to provide a slightly different perspective of the phenomenon of a shift in response type than previous studies usually have.

4. EXPERIMENT 1 - Changing Patterns of Response Type in the Word Associations of Foreign Language Learners

It is obvious that a study of learners' word associations will look for similarities between the association patterns of learners and native speakers. Consequently, when testing learners representing different levels of proficiency, it would be natural to expect a change towards a more "nativelike" association pattern as the learners get more proficient. It should be noted, though, that there may not be evidence of a shift in response type unless all the subjects are given the same test material. Though seldom reflected upon, this is the condition under which different patterns of response type have been observed for native speakers. This is important from the point of view that the experiment was designed to be fully comparable with previous native speaker material.

4.1. Specific Hypotheses

On the basis of previous findings for native speakers, the following hypotheses were set up for the investigation:

Provided all groups are presented with the same test material, proficient learners will produce

(1) a larger proportion of paradigmatic responses

(2) a smaller number of clang associates, and

(3) less diverse responses

than early learners.

4.2. Subjects

Unlike previous L2-research, this study contains data for four groups of learners instead of one. This is what made it possible to investigate whether learners' word associations undergo the same changes as those of native speakers. Whereas most L1-studies have focussed on groups of children and adults, the corresponding learner groups were selected to represent different levels of proficiency in their foreign language English. All the subjects included in the investigation were students within Finland-Swedish educational institutions, who studied English on a regular basis to a greater or lesser degree, or who had done so previously.

The least proficient group was made up of pupils in the 7th form of the Finnish comprehensive school. These subjects were 13-14 years old and only third-year students of English. They will henceforth be referred to as 7th grade pupils or 7th graders. Another group consisted of pupils in the second form at a "Gymnasium". They were 17-18 years old and had been learning English at school for almost seven years. The two most proficient groups were students at Åbo Akademi University. One was a group of first-year students at an average age of 20. These subjects were not students of English but they had all passed the matriculation examination in English. Finally, there was a group of advanced students of English, who had been studying the language as their main subject for 4.5 years on an average.

Each group consisted of 28 subjects. This total made it possible to avoid too mixed a group of first-year university students. In fact, a completely unified group of such students was not to be found. Therefore, 20 subjects were students of other languages than English (Swedish, Finnish, German and Russian) whereas the remaining eight subjects were students of the physical sciences. However, this is not believed to have influenced the results in any particular way.

4.3. Overall Design of the Word Association Test

The actual operation of a word association experiment is very simple. We are dealing with a test which can produce a wealth of material in a very short time. However, in order to design a word association test, a number of important variables must be taken into account. In particular, there is always a need to decide whether responses given to the stimulus words ought to be single or multiple, free or restricted, written or oral. Other problems involved are what words to use as stimuli and how to present them.

As far as research on response type is concerned, it has been customary to ask subjects to write down single item responses to stimuli presented in list form. This was the approach taken also in this study.

The main reason for using single responses was the fact that the youngest and least proficient subjects might not have coped with a task requiring multiple responses. Producing about five associations per stimulus word could have been quite an undertaking for these learners as well as an increased work load for all the testees. Another negative consequence of this method of continuous associations is the chaining of responses, i.e. the second association being influenced by the first association etc. rather than by the original stimulus (Randall, 1980). In studies of response type, which often involve a large number of stimulus words as well as subjects, multiple responses would also make the task of scoring extremely laborious.

As for the choice of free or restricted responses, it is obvious that studies of response type need to be based on free associations. The technique of restricted responses would, as the name itself says, impose restrictions on the subjects. For instance, they could be asked to produce a response which describes the stimulus, or one which is its superordinate or subordinate (Meara, 1980:238).

One argument sometimes raised against presenting stimuli in list form is the possibility of interference from other stimuli and responses visually accessible on the same sheet of paper. However, this is not a major problem due to the severe time limit imposed on subjects in a word association test using single responses. An alternative technique would be to present one word at a time on an overhead projector. This method would give the experimenter a chance to control the length of time given for each stimulus, which is clearly an advantage. However, this technique was not considered suitable for all four groups of this particular study. It is likely to have caused some inconvenience in a classroom full of young pupils, all of whom might not have realized the need to co-operate with the researcher and to keep the responses to themselves. Obviously, the best way of allowing subjects to see only one word at a time for a specific period of time would be to test each subject individually on a computer. Unfortunately, this could not be arranged at the time for this experiment. Half of the subject population had to be tested during the school day and were only available for a couple of lessons.

4.4. Test Material

One characteristic common to the whole field of word association research is the lack of agreement upon what words to use as stimulus words (Meara, 1980:235). Far more surprising, however, is the fact that very few studies give an account of how their particular stimulus words were chosen. Nor do they usually consider what results a different set of stimulus words might produce. Some of the published work have even been based on completely idiosyncratic lists, which have usually been made up of an extremely small number of stimulus words.

An alternative to unstandardized and idiosyncratic lists is the use of one of the prevailing standard lists of stimulus words. This was a decision taken in the present investigation. **The Kent-Rosanoff list**, which was used here, is one of the most well-known and frequently used standard word association tests. This test, which consists of 100 relatively frequent English words, has the advantage that it has been used in a large number of studies mainly with native speakers but also with L2-learners. For instance, this was the test used by Meara in his study of learners' word associations from 1978. For these stimulus words there are also well documented response norms, which cover different ages, languages and geographical areas (Postman & Keppel, 1970). It has been established that all of the Kent-Rosanoff stimulus words tend to elicit fairly stable response patterns from normal adult native speakers.

The choice of the Kent-Rosanoff list of stimulus words was also conditioned by the nature of the list itself. It is made up of relatively frequent words, most of which are nouns and adjectives and some of which are ambiguous as to noun or verb status. In principle, the fact that it consists of frequent words could be used as an argument against this list. This, however, does not apply to the present study, where the use of fairly frequent words was an absolute prerequisite for including early L2-learners. It is only natural that a study of this kind should be interested in the response patterns of people who have only recently started learning the language. The corresponding native speaker studies have been concerned with relatively frequent words for the same reason.

To be noted is finally that all the 100 words of the Kent-Rosanoff list were expected to be familiar only to the three most proficient test groups. As for the 7th grade pupils, they should have encountered at least 85 of the stimuli. This is an estimate based on their English text books as well as on the judgement of their English teacher. Still, the remaining 15 words were not excluded from their test material but were not analysed for this particular group. The reason for not excluding them was an interest in how learners react to words they are likely not to know or to have been only in brief contact with. In that the complete list was fully workable for three of the groups and that only 15 words would have to be statistically excluded for the least proficient group, it was not considered worthwhile replacing the stimuli in question with other words. In the alternative case that all four groups had been given a list of only 85 of the 100 stimulus words, three of the groups would have got a far too easy task. As the problem was solved here, however, the results of the 7th graders, though clearly suggestive, may not be fully comparable to those of the other groups, except where proportions are given.

4.5. Administrative Procedures

All four learner groups were tested on different occasions but were provided with the same test material. The test format consisted of three pages, one of instructions and the other two of stimulus words. There were 50 stimulus words to a page. This material was very similar to the one used by Kent and Rosanoff. Thus, it also used the same order of stimulus words. The instructions and the test sheets are presented in Appendices 1 and 2. To avoid misunderstandings the instructions were given in the subjects' mother tongue and were first presented orally at the beginning of each test occasion. This is the English version of the instructions, which were somewhat revised from the original Kent-Rosanoff test format:

> "On the following pages you will see 100 English words. After each word write the first **English** word that comes into your mind. Start with the first word, look at it, write down the word it makes you think of, then proceed to the next word. Always respond with a single word and do try to find a response for all the words. Work rapidly until you have finished all 100 words. When you are through, turn your paper over and write on the back the letter that appears on the board at that time.

If there are questions, please ask.
Do not turn the page yet."

Only after the instructions had been given orally, was the test material passed on to the subjects. They were then requested to read the written instructions on the first page and to provide the information asked for on top of the page. All the subjects were asked to give their age and year of study. The university students were also requested to give their grade in English obtained in the matriculation examination. The other two groups, however, were asked to reveal their names rather than their grades. These grades were then obtained afterwards from their respective English teachers. This was believed to be the best way of getting reliable information and to avoid upsetting the pupils. It should be justified on the grounds that this information will never be used against anybody in any way. There were no particular reactions from the subjects who did not remain anonymous. Revealing their grades, however, is most likely to have caused a flow of anxious reactions. Information of this kind was collected mainly to get an estimate of the proficiency of the subjects, especially the first three groups, which were not made up of university students of English. The average grade in English for the group of 7th graders and the pupils at "Gymnasium" level was 8.1 and 7.8, respectively, on a scale from 4-10. As for the first-year university students, all but three had achieved the highest grade in English in the matriculation examination.

Before the subjects were allowed to start, they were also told the maximum time available for the task. The time factor was somewhat adjusted to the proficiency of the different groups. The 7th grade pupils were given 20 minutes whereas the pupils at "Gymnasium" level as well as the first-year university students had 15 minutes. However, the advanced students of English were given only 13 minutes, which is the time usually set for native speakers. The subjects were also reminded to follow the order of the stimulus words and not to change anything afterwards.

Following the instructions and the ready signal, the subjects then began to work at the word association test. When four minutes had passed, the administrator wrote a letter on the board, which was changed at 30-seconds' intervals until the test was supposed to be over. By that time, most subjects had managed to complete the task. Asking the subjects to note the letter appearing on the board when they had finished was a simple and accurate way of measuring the time needed by individual subjects. It turned out that the 7th graders needed 14 minutes on an average whereas the two intermediate groups used 12 and 11 minutes, respectively. The most proficient group had an average of only 9 minutes.

To be noted is finally that even though the groups were tested separately, the data could not always be gathered from all the 28 subjects on the same occasion. University students, in particular, are generally difficult to get hold of due to the fact that they attend different courses and to the relatively high rate of absence. Therefore, in order to reach as many students as possible, some separate test occasions had to be arranged. However, the same instructions were given on each occasion.

The 7th grade pupils, on the other hand, created a slightly different problem. In fact, it was necessary to test as many as 40 pupils to get a group of 28 with an average response number of 90 out of 100. It is natural that completing a test of 100 words in a foreign language should be a most demanding task for young learners. Another thing worth remembering is that only 85 of these 100 words were expected to be familiar to the average 7th grader. Consequently, out of 40 testees, 28 were selected by including those who had given most responses to the stimuli - provided they had taken the task seriously. Surprisingly, this did not result in a sample of the very best pupils. Rather, there was a nice average covering most grades between six and ten. This suggests that some of the good pupils are so anxious to produce well in a test that they cannot cope with a task where no specific instructions are given as to what words to respond with. The average pupil seems to be more relaxed in this kind of situation.

4.6. Method of Scoring - Classification of Response Type

Each response given to the 100 stimulus words was assigned to one of four response categories. Responses were classified as **syntagmatic**, **paradigmatic**, **clang associates** or **"other" responses**. As we shall see, a considerable proportion of the responses given in a word association test is made up of syntagmatic and paradigmatic responses. However, the most interesting responses are often to be found in the other two categories. Still, there are studies which have strictly confined themselves to the two main response categories. In the following, the specific criteria for assigning a response to a particular category will be presented.

What is seldom commented on in the literature is the fact that the syntagmatic - paradigmatic distinction, though usually fairly straightforward, always involves a number of difficult decisions. In fact, any response classification using this distinction ought to be based on strict definitions of the two categories. However, this is not often the case. Syntagmatic and paradigmatic responses are often defined simply on the basis of whether they belong to the same form class as the stimulus word or not. Though this may work quite well in a large number of cases, it will turn out to be a too simplified approach. For instance, there are always cases where the stimulus and the response belong to the same form class but still make a sensible syntagmatic sequence (CHAIR-**man**). Further, there is also the possibility that some stimuli and responses may represent several form classes. Nor is it at all unusual that a response fits neither category. One difficulty involved in response classification is the fact that the analysis takes place on word level rather than context level. For practical reasons, it is usually difficult to refer back to a subject for elucidation.

In this particular study, the distinction between syntagmatic and paradigmatic responses is partly based on the definitions by Lyons (1977). According to him,

> "The syntagmatic relations which a unit contracts are those which it contracts by virtue of its combination (in a syntagm or construction) with other units of the same level".
>
> (Lyons, 1977:240)

Examples of syntagmatic relations would be BRUSH - **teeth**, HOLD - **hands**, BLACK - **horse** and AFRAID - **of**.

A paradigmatic response, on the other hand, often belongs to the same form class as the stimulus. Given DOG, the responses **cat**, **wolf** or **animal** would all be classified as paradigmatic. The words do not only share a large part of their meaning but they can also occur in similar contexts. Or, as Lyons puts it:

> "The paradigmatic relations contracted by units are those which hold between a particular unit in a given syntagm and other units which are substitutable for it in the syntagm".
>
> (Idem:241)

It is obvious that classification by form class will still apply to a large number of cases. However, some further specifications had to be made. In this study, the specific criteria for classifying responses as syntagmatic or paradigmatic are based on the scoring system employed by Ervin (1961). Ervin's study, though published in the early sixties, contains one of the few detailed accounts of response classification available today. It is still considered highly relevant to anyone interested in the subject. For the purpose of this study, the method of scoring provided by Ervin was only slightly modified.

A response is classified as **paradigmatic** if it in addition to bearing an obvious semantic link to the stimulus

(a) can represent the same form class as the stimulus word even if each or either also occurs in other classes,

and if it

(b) does not occur in immediate sequence with the stimulus or separated only by a determiner in ordinary continuous speech (traditional articles and possessive pronouns).

(Ervin, 1961:366)

These criteria were believed to isolate the purest instances of paradigmatic responses. In particular, they should reveal all cases where stimuli and responses belong to the same form class but obviously represent a syntagmatic association. Consequently, the following associations were classified as syntagmatic: CHAIR - **man**, TABLE - **cloth** and HOUSE - **door**. The use of specific criteria is vital also in cases where the form class of either the stimulus or the response is ambiguous. There were a number of cases, however, where the second restrictive criterion above was extended to comprise prepositions in addition to articles and possessive pronouns. For instance, the responses **bed** and **night** for the stimulus word SLEEP, which can be both a noun and a verb, were classified as syntagmatic rather than paradigmatic. Here, the subjects are most likely to have thought in terms of the combinations - **sleep in bed**, **sleep at night**.

To be noted is also that many of the usual syntagmatic responses seem to indicate backward association, especially if the stimulus word is a noun, e.g. MAN - **dark** and EARTH - **round**. However, a noun followed by an adjective was classified as syntagmatic only in the following cases:

(a) if the response adjective usually **precedes** the stimulus noun, and

(b) if the response word would make a meaningful sentence if "is" was inserted between the stimulus and the response.

(Entwisle, 1966:45f.)

What is not always commented on in the literature is the fact that all responses given in a word association test cannot be classified as either syntagmatic or paradigmatic. For instance, a huge test material always comprises a certain number of **clang associates**. According to a definition by Meara (1982), clang associates are rhyming responses or responses with the same initial sounds or a similar consonant cluster as the stimulus word. However, they show no obvious syntactic or semantic link to the stimulus word. Typical examples of clang associates are CABBAGE - **baggage**, THIEF - **thick** and THIRSTY - **nasty**.

Apart from the categories of syntagmatic, paradigmatic and clang responses, it was necessary here also to introduce a fourth category of **"other"** responses. In fact, this category comprised five subcategories: **repetitious**, **anomalous** and **unclassifiable** responses as well as **purely Swedish** responses and responses showing an **obvious Swedish influence**. Due to the fact that some of these subcategories were extremely small, they were all treated as a single category, "other" responses.

A response was classified as repetitious if the stimulus word or the stimulus word plus a prefix or suffix was repeated, or if the word had been conjugated in some way. Examples of repetitions are BEAUTIFUL - **beauty**, ANGER - **angry**, SLEEP - **sleepy**, THIEF - **thieves** and FOOT - **feet**. Anomalous responses, on the other hand, would show no obvious or meaningful relation to the stimulus, not even phonetic resemblance. There was an obvious need also for the categories of purely Swedish responses and responses showing an obvious Swedish influence. Finally, the category of unclassifiable responses was there to take care of the cases of no response or illegible responses. However, there were not many of these cases.

With the help of a detailed method of scoring the number of subjective judgements can be satisfactorily minimized. Still, some ambiguity is always present in a study of this size, where 10.000 responses have to be analysed. However, as long as the same criteria are applied to all groups and the same responses are classified in the same way, the reliability of the results should not be endangered.

4.7. Statistical Analysis

The huge amount of data arising from this experiment was systematized by calculating for each individual subject the number of responses belonging to each of the four response categories. To find out about the degree of syntagmatic or paradigmatic dominance for each group, the percentage of paradigmatic responses was calculated for each subject out of his total number of syntagmatic and paradigmatic responses. On the basis of individual scores, the mean percentage of paradigmatic responses as well as the mean number of responses in each of the four response categories were calculated for each group of subjects. See Tables 1-3 in the appendices. Due to the lower response total for the least proficient group, the mean numbers of clang and "other" responses were also turned into percentages. Part of the data was also submitted to an analysis of variance.

In the original version of this experiment (Söderman 1988), the proportions of the two main response categories were given as ratios, i.e. the ratio of syntagmatic to paradigmatic responses. The reason for recalculating these data was to get figures ranging from 1 to 100 and which would be easier to interpret than the figures gained by ratios. A ratio of 2.33, for instance, may not make as much sense as the result 30%.

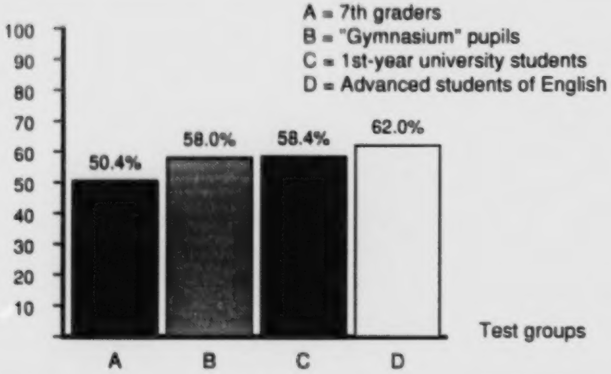
4.8. Test Results

The results of this experiment clearly pointed to certain differences in the response patterns of the four test groups. There was an almost consistent trend towards an increase in paradigmatic responding and a decrease in the number of syntagmatic, clang and "other" responses with increasing proficiency.

The syntagmatic and paradigmatic responses were the dominant response categories for all the test groups. However, there was a change of proportions of the two types across the four levels of proficiency. The 7th graders clearly produced the lowest percentage of paradigmatic responses, 50.4, which indicated an almost equal number of syntagmatic and paradigmatic responses. A first step towards paradigmatic dominance was taken by the two intermediate groups with percentages of 58.0 and 58.4, respectively. The advanced learners of English accounted for the largest proportion of paradigmatic responses, 62.0%.

In view of the fact that we are dealing with proportions rather than the total number of syntagmatic and paradigmatic responses for the different groups, the results of the 7th grade pupils should be largely comparable to those of the other groups. As for the groups whose results were based on responses to all 100 stimuli, the decrease in syntagmatic responding as well as the increase in paradigmatic responding also appears from the mean number of syntagmatic and paradigmatic responses for these groups. For the syntagmatic responses there was a decrease from 37.5 to 37.0 and 36.5 whereas for the paradigmatic responses there was an increase from 51.8 to 52.0 and 59.8. Worth noting is also that the total number of syntagmatic and paradigmatic responses was not equal for any of the groups in that all responses had not been classified as syntagmatic or paradigmatic. The proportions of paradigmatic responses for the four groups are illustrated in Figure 1.

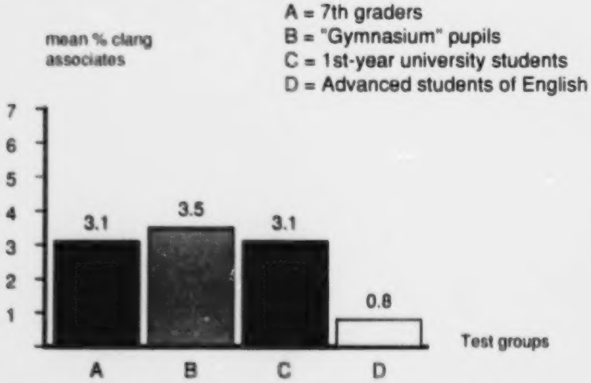
Figure 1.
The mean percentage of paradigmatic responses



These data were submitted to an analysis of variance, in which the main effect was proficiency. This analysis showed a significant proficiency effect $[F(3,108) = 6.0019, p < .001]$. Further analysis showed that there was no significant difference between the three most proficient groups and it is therefore concluded that the difference in the main analysis lies between the 7th graders and the other three groups.

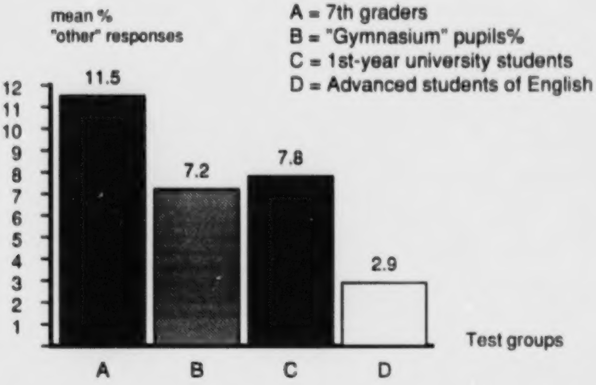
Though comparatively small on the whole, the remaining two response categories, clang associates and "other" responses, seemed to attract fewer responses the more proficient the subjects were. There was a consistent decrease in the number of clang associates across the three most proficient groups for whom responses to all 100 stimuli had been analysed. The mean number (and percentage) of responses owing to formal similarity was 3.5 for the pupils at "Gymnasium" level, 3.1 for the first-year university students and only 0.8 for the advanced students of English. Somewhat surprisingly, however, the mean number of clang responses for the 7th grade pupils was only 2.6, which despite their lower response total turns out to be rather low. In percentages this figure is still not higher than 3.1. Some possible reasons for this will be discussed in the following chapter. However, the obvious decrease in clang responses for groups B, C and D is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2.
The proportion of clang associates



There was a similar decrease also in the number of responses classified as "other". However, this time the 7th grade pupils fitted nicely into the expected pattern despite their lower response total. Consequently, this group produced the largest mean number of "other" responses, 9.8, which makes 11.5% of the 85 stimulus words. Next there was a decrease to 7.2 for the pupils at "Gymnasium" level. Somewhat surprisingly, this figure for the first-year university students was as high as 7.8. However, the mean of 2.9 produced by the advanced students of English was clearly the lowest. Except for group C, the decrease in the number of responses classified as "other" is clearly to be seen in Figure 3.

Figure 3.
The proportion of "other" responses



The data for the two minor response categories were not submitted to an analysis of variance. The small number of responses in these categories would have made interpretation very difficult.

In the following chapter the test results presented here will be discussed within a larger theoretical framework.

5. THEORETICAL DISCUSSION

The first objective of this investigation was to provide evidence of changes in the response patterns of foreign language learners. The results of Experiment 1 confirm that each of the four response categories showed an almost fully consistent development in the expected direction.

As for the percentage of paradigmatic responses, there was a significant difference between the least proficient learners and the other three groups. Whereas the 7th graders produced an almost equal proportion of syntagmatic and paradigmatic responses, the more proficient learners gave evidence of a stronger paradigmatic dominance. However, the differences between these three groups turned out not to be significant. Still, the fact that the least and the most proficient groups were significantly different clearly provides support for the expected trend towards a stronger paradigmatic dominance. In fact, it is hardly surprising that the two intermediate groups, who were rather close in terms of proficiency, did not differ markedly from each other. It is rather more surprising that the first-year university students and the advanced students of English were not significantly different. However, the second experiment to be dealt with here may provide an answer to this question.

Somewhat surprisingly, also, the expected decrease in the number of clang associates seemed to apply only to the three most proficient groups. On closer inspection of the test material, however, a considerable proportion of the clang associates produced by these groups were responses to some of the most "difficult" stimulus words, i.e. the words which were not analysed for the 7th graders. Examples of such stimulus words and responses are MUTTON - **button**, SMOOTH - **tooth**, SOUR - **pour**, CABBAGE - **luggage**, STEM - **stim**, HEALTH - **wealth** and BLOSSOM - **bottom**. Either these stimulus words are more apt to evoke rhyming responses due to their phonological structure, or they might have been only loosely integrated in the learners' mental lexicon. Consequently, the small number of clang associates produced by the 7th graders could result from the absence of more "difficult" words among the remaining 85 words, or from the absence of words of a particular phonological structure. Interestingly enough, the clang associates produced by the 7th graders were given for words which did not generally evoke rhyming responses among the other subjects. Examples of such stimulus words are CHAIR, COLD, DEEP, HAND, SLOW and WISH. Perhaps these words were as unfamiliar to some representatives of this group as the above stimuli were to the subjects of the other groups. This will be returned to shortly. Anyhow, the deviant behaviour of the 7th graders is most likely to have been caused by external circumstances. All the clang associates produced by each group are compiled in Appendices 5-8. To be noted is, however, how extremely small the proportion of clang associates, in fact, was for each group. Most subjects produced very few or no clang associates in response to the 100 stimulus words. However, there were subjects who produced considerably more clang associates than others.

Though the proportion of "other" responses was not very large either, there was an obvious decline also in the number of such responses. As for the finding that the first-year university students produced more "other" responses than the "Gymnasium" pupils, it might simply reflect the fact that these groups were fairly close in terms of proficiency. Anyway, there is clearly a need for a category of this kind in studies of response type. At least L2-learners always come up with a number of repetitious, anomalous and unclassifiable responses, or responses being influenced by their L1.

The fact that the word associations of foreign language learners seem to undergo the same changes as those of native speakers raises the question of the nature and origin of these changes. It has been customary to claim that a shift in response type is related to the overall proficiency of the subjects, adult native speakers preferring paradigmatic responses and children syntagmatic and clang responses. However, though the learner data presented here could be taken to support such claims, I believe there is more to it than that. For instance, we need to consider the particular circumstances under which the shift has been observed. Both in this study and the corresponding native speaker studies, groups of differing language proficiency were presented with a set of fairly frequent words. It is only natural that more proficient learners have less difficulty than early learners or children with a task involving frequent words. However, it is not necessarily the case that the same subjects would behave in the same way on a different set of stimuli.

At this point of the discussion, it seems safer to assume that the differences between groups of subjects in studies of this kind are more a function of increasing proficiency in respect of the particular stimulus words tested than increasing overall proficiency. What these findings at least reflect is the development of a fixed set of words as the subjects' familiarity with these words increases. Naturally, the findings could also be said to reflect the nature of the mental lexicon as a whole at different levels of proficiency. This lexicon, when described in word association terms, would range from a stage dominated by words yielding syntagmatic, clang or anomalous responses to a stage where paradigmatic responses would dominate. However, such a global perspective of the findings is not sufficient to explain **why** or even **how** these response shifts take place.

As I see it, the phenomenon of a shift in response type should basically be related to the development of individual words in the lexicon of a native speaker or foreign language learner - regardless of his level of proficiency. Each word being acquired will undergo different stages of development. A word which has just entered the mental word store is likely first to elicit anomalous or clang responses whereas later it may pass on to a syntagmatic or a paradigmatic stage. Naturally, the time for this shift may vary from one word to another. Therefore, a shift in response type is likely **not** to affect all the words in the mental lexicon at the same time. In fact, the data reported here show that even the responses of the most proficient learners contained a rather surprising number of syntagmatic responses as well as a number of clang and diverse responses. The least proficient learners, on the other hand, produced an impressive number of paradigmatic responses though they clearly differed from the more proficient groups.

Still, it is only natural that the mental word stores of proficient learners and adult native speakers are larger and more developed than those of early learners and children. This is why even a set of frequent words can result in obvious differences between learners representing different levels of proficiency.

However, it is a firm belief of mine that the lexicon of a language learner never changes as a whole at a specific level of proficiency. Lexical development is a slow process affecting the individual words being or to be incorporated in the lexicon. Not only are already acquired words forgotten and need to be relearned but new words are also encountered and integrated in the mental word store. This should be the case regardless of the level of proficiency of the learner or whether the language in question is his native or a foreign language. Consequently, lexical development is a lifelong process, in which each word encountered by an individual will have to pass different stages to become fully integrated, if ever, in the mental lexicon. The particular response types obtained for different words in a word association task may simply reflect the subject's knowledge of the words in question. At any age or level of proficiency word associations will contain all kinds of responses because, at all ages and stages of language learning, words are being acquired and incorporated in the mental lexicon.

This framework of lexical development leads on to issues such as **"what does it mean to know a word"** and **"when can a word be said to be acquired"**. These issues have been dealt with by modern linguists such as Blum-Kulka, Takala and Ringbom in their respective works of 1981, 1984 and 1987.

According to Blum-Kulka, complete lexical knowledge would involve knowledge of all aspects of word meaning and word usage. This would require a level of competence which is seldom achieved even by native speakers except for a limited number of words. As Ringbom puts it, some of the most crucial aspects or dimensions of lexical knowledge are accessibility of a word, knowledge of the semantic mapping, morphophonological, syntactic, collocational and associational constraints of words (1987:36f.). Since each dimension is likely to involve different degrees of knowledge, the task of achieving a high level of lexical knowledge is further complicated. Ringbom states that whereas native speakers will come close to the top of the continuum for each dimension, foreign language learners will be lower down on most or all scales. However, here it would be possible also to separate proficient learners from early learners of a foreign language while at least some of the most proficient learners might reach a level close to that of adult native speakers.

Since the degree of lexical knowledge is affected by factors such as frequency, recency and automatization of a word, the lexicon of any language learner, proficient or not, will contain words at different stages of development. Each word being acquired will proceed more or less from the bottom of the scale to the top but might later return to a lower level. To be noted is also that a learner's knowledge of a word may differ markedly for comprehension and production. A word may be easily comprehended though seldom used productively. Thus, a considerable proportion of a language learner's word store will consist of passive vocabulary. In the case of foreign language learners there is also the possibility that the L1 will influence the development of words in the L2.

Consequently, as far as the mental lexicon is concerned, similarities between L1- and L2-speakers of a language are not only to be found between learners and young children. Whereas an adult native speaker or a highly proficient learner might well achieve an almost complete knowledge of the syntactical system of a language, the number of words to be acquired in any language is close to unlimited. Also, considering the fact that there are different degrees of knowing a word, it is obvious that the task of learning words is likely never to be fully completed.

The framework of lexical development proposed here is, thus, word-based combining lexical development in English both as an L1 and an L2 without restricting the task of learning words to a particular period of life or stage of language learning. This, however, is only the broad outline rather than an all-embracing theory of lexical development. I do not wish to claim that lexical development would be identical in

English as a native and a foreign language though I believe it may be fundamentally similar. As far as a global perspective of vocabulary is concerned, however, it is obvious that the lexicon of early learners and children, on one hand, and proficient learners and adult native speakers, on the other hand, will differ in both size and quality. Naturally, the latter will have achieved larger vocabularies as well as a higher level of lexical knowledge than the former in their foreign and native languages, respectively. It is also important to note that a shift in response type may only reflect one dimension of lexical knowledge, perhaps a semantic dimension. However, a high or low level of knowledge of one aspect of a word is likely to be accompanied by a similar standard for other dimensions involved in learning the word.

Against this background, some characteristics of the present findings will appear in new and interesting light. It has been suggested that stimulus words which are only loosely integrated in the mental lexicon of a language learner are likely first to evoke completely anomalous responses or clang associates. However, L2-learners may also come up with a number of "unenglish" responses, which usually show some interference from the L1. Indeed, the present material contained some instances of the stimulus word being mixed up with a similar sounding Swedish word, or the response being a mixture of a Swedish and an English word. Interestingly enough, examples of these rather odd but interesting reactions were to be found at all levels of proficiency. Even advanced students seemed to have difficulties in coping with some of the words included in the test. This, however, only provides support for the ideas presented above. A few examples of responses showing an obvious Swedish influence will be discussed below.

The stimulus word STEM, which was analysed for only three of the groups, was by a number of subjects thought to correspond in meaning to the Swedish verb "stämma" (ett instrument) or the Swedish noun "stämma" (röst). Common associations to this word was, therefore, **music**, **instrument**, **voice** and **sound**. The associations SPIDER - **net** and WHISTLE - **pipe** also seem to be influenced by the Swedish words "spindelnät" and "visselpipa". One could perhaps argue that the word STEM was not familiar to the subjects and was, therefore, interpreted as the most similar sounding Swedish word. This is not likely to be the case, though, considering the level of proficiency of the subjects. Their knowledge of this word, however, may still be rather vague, which may have led their thoughts to a similar sounding word in their L1.

Finally, some of the deviations found among the test results will also be discussed. The small number of clang associates produced by the 7th graders is not too surprising after all considering the fact that 15 of the most difficult words in the test were statistically excluded for this group, leaving the test with 85 highly frequent words. No such deviation is likely to have occurred if their test had contained even a slightly more difficult set of stimulus words. Still, it could have been words which the 7th graders would have encountered before. In fact, a different pattern would emerge also if the 15 most difficult words were excluded for the other three groups as well. In this case, the mean number of clang associates would be only 0.9 for the "Gymnasium" pupils and 0.5 for the advanced students whereas it was 2.6 for the 7th graders. However, the first-year university students would still have as high a mean number of clang associates as 1.5. See Appendices 6-8. Anyway, it is hardly surprising that basic words which are usually acquired at a very early stage of language learning do not evoke a very large number of clang responses even among 7th graders. However, a fair number of clang associates were found among the responses of these subjects to the 15 words which were not part of their test but which were still not excluded from their test material. There is reason to assume, though, that these words were not at all familiar to these subjects.

Finally, the use of relatively frequent words is likely also to account for the fact that none of the test groups showed a particularly strong predominance of syntagmatic responses or a very large number of clang and "other" responses. It seems as if most of the words used in this test had already passed the lowest stages of lexical knowledge in the lexicon of these learners. This may also be one reason why there was not a significant difference between the three most proficient groups for syntagmatic and paradigmatic responses.

As this discussion may have shown, a shift in response type is not necessarily a function only of age and language proficiency. The subjects' familiarity with the stimulus words appears to have a greater influence than has usually been admitted. To test this assumption, another word association experiment was carried out, this time with adult native speakers, highly proficient learners and a set of both frequent and infrequent words. This experiment will be dealt with in the following chapter.

6. EXPERIMENT 2 - The Responses of Adult Native Speakers and Advanced Learners to Frequent and Infrequent Words

Most studies of response type in the word associations of native speakers and foreign language learners have been concerned with relatively frequent words. From these studies stems the common assumption that adult native speakers prefer paradigmatic responses and children and early learners of a foreign language syntagmatic and clang responses. On the basis of the foregoing discussion, however, there is good reason to believe that the choice of stimulus words could have a major influence on the test results. An adult native speaker or advanced learner would not necessarily react in the same way to a set of infrequent words as to a set of frequent words. In fact, if these subjects were presented with relatively infrequent stimulus words, they would be likely to produce responses similar to those reported for children and early learners. To my knowledge, there is only one study comparing the responses of adult native speakers to frequent and infrequent words. This is a study by Stolz and Tiffany (1972). However, no such study has been made for foreign language learners.

Some further experimental data will be reported here, which concern both native speakers and foreign language learners and their responses to a set of both frequent and infrequent words.

6.1. Specific Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were set up for the investigation:

The subjects being adult native speakers and advanced learners of English,

(1) a set of **frequent words** will result in

- **a.** a larger proportion of paradigmatic than syntagmatic responses,
- **b.** only a small number of clang responses and "other" responses

whereas

(2) a set of **infrequent words** will result in

- **a.** a larger proportion of syntagmatic than paradigmatic responses,
- **b.** a fair number of clang responses and "other" responses.

As for differences between the groups, the advanced learners and the native speakers were expected not to differ very much on the set of frequent words. Proficient learners would not have more difficulties dealing with these words than native speakers. However, a set of infrequent words would be more likely to distinguish these learners from the native speakers, at least to some extent. Thus, this experiment is also a test of how the response patterns of advanced L2-learners differ from those of native speakers.

6.2. Subjects

My original intention when planning the subject population of this experiment was to find a sample of L2-learners all of whom could be characterized as quasi natives. However, there was first the problem of defining quasi nativeness and of measuring the level of proficiency of the subjects to be used.

The traditional method of assessing language proficiency is to use a variety of test types, such as grammar tests, listening and reading comprehension tests and oral interviews. However, these kinds of tests are very time-consuming both for the testee and the administrator. Recently, attempts have been made to develop tests which would not only be easy to administer but which would also be self-correcting. Dr. Paul Meara at the University of Wales is a pioneer in this field. He has developed a self-correcting computerized test, which is intended to estimate the vocabulary size of a learner. Even though this is strictly a vocabulary test, it has been found to correlate remarkably well with tests measuring other linguistic skills. What this suggests is that the overall proficiency of a learner could be measured only by testing one particular skill. It is indeed highly unlikely that someone could possess a huge word store in a foreign language without being proficient in other organizational skills[1] as well. Nor is anyone who has just started learning a language likely to score very high on a vocabulary test or any other test. However, motor-perceptual skills like pronunciation and intonation may be an exception here. An excellent knowledge of the structure and vocabulary of a foreign language is not necessarily related to flawless pronunciation and fluent speech. Nor is good pronunciation always an indication of a good knowledge of the language.

For the purpose of this experiment, a version of the Swansea Vocabulary Tests was used (Meara, 1990). Apart from being self-correcting, the test can be performed on a pocket-size computer and does not take more than 20 minutes to administer. When a word appears on the computer screen, the subject is supposed to press one button if he thinks he knows the word, and another if he does not. The test items are made up of both real English words and imaginary words, which are presented in blocks from 1-10. Each block of words is a sample from a band of 1000 words, graded by frequency.

---

[1] A distinction between organizational and motor-perceptual skills has been made by Pit Corder (1973: 133). The former refer to planning and identifying processes and the latter to processes of recognition and articulatory execution.

The function of the imaginary words is to check the reliability of the subject. Anyone saying YES to all the real words and to all the imaginary words is obviously not very reliable. However, anyone saying YES to 85 real words and only 2% of the imaginary words clearly seems to be able to distinguish the real words from the imaginary words. By adjusting a subject's score for real words in the light of his score for imaginary words, the computer can arrive at an estimate of how many words the subject really knows. Anyone trying to cheat in saying YES to words he actually does not know will risk accepting many of the imaginary items as well, which will adjust his score downwards. Equally, all NO-answers to words which are real English words will affect his score negatively.

The test items are representatives of the 10.000 most frequent English words, the first block testing words from the 1000 most frequent words, the second block words from the 2000 most frequent words etc. Anyone scoring 10.000, which is the highest possible score for the test, is assumed to be familiar with the 10.000 most frequent words in the English language. This is, in fact, an indication of a much larger vocabulary in that anyone knowing these words, will naturally know many more thousand words. According to Meara, normal educated adult native speakers usually get very close to the top score. However, the vocabulary profiles of foreign language learners look quite different from those of native speakers. Whereas a native speaker scores high on all 10 blocks, a good learner usually scores fairly well on the first five blocks but then shows a drastic fall for the remaining five blocks.

To get at least a rough measure of what would count as quasi nativeness in this test, Dr. Meara was consulted. He suggested a minimum score of 9200 for quasi natives. This would require a very high score indeed on all ten blocks, in fact, as high as that of native speakers on the first five blocks and an only slightly lower score on the remaining blocks. This is obviously a standard which very few advanced learners of English can achieve. Not surprisingly, the original aim of finding 30 quasi natives within the two universities in Turku turned out not to be realistic. After testing both staff and students at Åbo Akademi University and Turun Yliopisto as well as a number of

English teachers, there were 28 subjects with scores ranging between 7319 and 9886. Only half of them would count as quasi natives and the other half would simply be called advanced learners of English. This was not a major problem, though, since all the subjects were still very proficient, which was the main criterion in this investigation. However, as a group, these subjects will henceforth be referred to as advanced learners of English rather than quasi native speakers.

Due to the difficulty of finding a suitable number of highly proficient learners, the subjects of this study were not very homogeneous. Among the 28 subjects there were university lecturers, school teachers, research students and graduate students representing widely different age categories. However, they were the most proficient learners available at the time for this investigation.

It may seem remarkable that a computerized vocabulary test could yield reliable information on the level of proficiency of a learner. Nevertheless, the test does seem to pick out gross differences between learners who would generally all be characterized as proficient. Interestingly enough, the results obtained here agree remarkably well with what one would expect from these subjects. Among the 14 subjects characterized as quasi natives there were two lecturers married to Englishmen, four lecturers with a Ph.D. degree, one postgraduate lecturer, three postgraduate students working on their Ph.D.s, two senior school teachers with a long working experience and two graduate students with a special interest in vocabulary. The remaining 14 subjects were either ordinary lecturers, school teachers or graduate students. Not unexpectedly, the graduate students produced the lowest scores. The scores for all the 28 subjects are given in Appendix 12. Whether these scores are considered too high or too low, this test seems to have graded the subjects in a fairly realistic order. Still, the definition of quasi nativeness remains a highly subjective matter. It is obvious, though, that only very few learners will ever achieve a standard of foreign language proficiency which would be close to native proficiency. This is why finding a sample of quasi natives is not an easy task.

This new and interesting approach to language testing certainly raises a lot of questions and it also involves certain problems. This will be dealt with in a later section of this chapter.

An equal number of native speaker informants of a comparable educational level were also used for the investigation. They were staff and students at the University College of Swansea and should, thus, correspond fairly well to the learner sample. They, too, represented widely different age categories. For practical reasons, these subjects were only asked to do the main test, the word association task. Since I had to rely on the help of other people to run the tests, both tasks would have required too much time. Anyway, the computerized vocabulary test was needed mainly as a means of measuring the level of proficiency of the L2-learners. There is no reason to believe that these native speakers would have scored lower than the learners on this test.

6.3. Test Material

The word association material, specifically designed for this investigation, was made up of 64 English stimulus words, half of which were frequent words and the other half infrequent words. The stimulus words were selected on the basis of one of the most recent frequency lists "Word Frequencies in British and American English" by Hofland and Johansson (1982). Words which occur more than 50 times in a corpus of a million words were counted as frequent whereas words with an occurrence of ten times or less per million were characterized as infrequent. See Appendix 9. Worth noting is that all stimulus words but four were adjectives. These four filler words were included only to distract subjects from the fact that the words to be tested were adjectives. Consequently, responses to these words were not analysed.

There is some rather controversial evidence of the influence of form class on response type in word association. However, this research has usually been concerned with a very limited number of stimulus words and any differences that have been found may not be due to form class at all. Therefore, if this issue was to be investigated the material would have to consist of at least 30 stimulus words per form class. This is far beyond the scope of this experiment, where the use of 30 frequent and 30 infrequent adjectives seemed a most reasonable decision. If adjectives, nouns and verbs had been included, there would have been only 20 words representing each form class, 10 for the frequent words and 10 for the infrequent words. Such an approach would not have made a much better sample than a set of 60 adjectives.

It was difficult, though, to restrict the set of stimuli only to such adjectives as could not be treated as other form classes as well. However, only seven of the stimulus words were ambiguous in this respect. These words were: RIGHT (noun), KIND (noun), DAINTY (noun), SINGLE (verb), STAUNCH (verb), NEAR (adverb), HARD (adverb). It was usually quite evident from the responses to these stimuli what meaning a subject had attributed to the words, and the responses were simply analysed according to that.

The investigation by Stolz and Tiffany (1972) was also based on a set of frequent and infrequent adjectives. However, these stimulus words made 27 word pairs, each of which consisted of two approximately synonymous adjectives. Though this may seem a rather attractive approach, the use of synonymous words no doubt restricts the choice of stimulus words. In fact, finding a large and good sample of close synonymous pairs, where one word is a high-frequency word and the other a low-frequency word, is not an easy task. Another disadvantage of this method is the possibility that one of the words will influence the response to the other even if all the words included in the test are carefully mixed.

The frequent and the infrequent words of the present study were not presented separately but were randomly scattered through the whole list. Otherwise, the subjects might have realized that different responses were expected for the two types of stimulus words, which could have resulted in the use of different response strategies. Still, there is always the possibility that someone will develop a particular strategy for the whole test, such as giving synonyms or antonyms to all the words. To avoid this, subjects were encouraged to respond spontaneously to each of the stimulus words. The order of the stimulus words is presented in Appendix 10.

Finally, it should be remembered that an infrequent word is not necessarily a difficult word. It was assumed, though, that the subjects would be less familiar with most of the infrequent words than with the set of frequent words. This would find expression in a somewhat different response pattern for the infrequent than for the frequent words.

6.4. Administrative Procedures

The design and operation of this word association test was almost identical with the first experiment. There were two pages, one of instructions and the other of stimulus words with a blank provided for each response. These are the instructions given to all subjects, both native speakers and L2-learners:

> "This word association test is made up of 64 English words.
> Your task is to write down the **first English word** that each of the stimulus words makes you think of. **Any response is as good as any other as long as it is the first English word that comes into your mind**.
> Please try to find a response for all the words. Try to work quickly through the list. You will be given about 10 minutes to complete the test.
> Thank you for your help."

The test sheets of the native speakers also contained some general information on this project since I was not able to administer these tests myself.

It should be pointed out that the test situation was about 20 minutes longer for the advanced learners, who were also asked to perform the computerized vocabulary test. Due to this test, the subjects had to be tested individually. After completing the word association test, they were also asked whether they thought they knew the meaning of all the stimulus words. In case they were not sure about a particular word, it was marked with a question mark. A word which was completely unfamiliar to a subject was marked with a zero. The purpose of this was simply to facilitate the response analysis. Most of the subjects claimed to have at least a rough idea of all the stimulus words and no one seemed to have difficulties with more than five words. Due to the fact that these subjects had to perform two tasks, it was decided not to test their exact knowledge of the infrequent words in a separate test.

As for the computerized vocabulary test, each subject was requested to press the YES button not only if he recognized an item as an English word **but** if he was also sure about the meaning of this word. This would give a more accurate picture of his actual skills than if he simply had to decide whether the test items were real English words or not. Naturally, the subject's choice of strategy is something that the administrator cannot really control and it is, therefore, one of the weaknesses of this test. However, anyone saying YES to a word he is not absolutely sure of, will risk losing points if his guess happens to be wrong. In fact, many of the imaginary words are so close to real English words that a very accurate knowledge of the language is required in order for the subject to make the right decisions. Therefore, there should not be many instances either where an item is recognized as an English word without the subject having any idea of the meaning of that word.

It is obvious that a test which is based on the recognition of written words could involve specific problems for some groups of learners. For instance, this test has been found not to work very well with Arab learners of English, who have difficulties recognizing vowels (Ryan & Meara, 1992). Obviously, dyslexic people will not do well in this kind of test either. It is finally worth noting that this is a test of passive vocabulary knowledge. However, anyone possessing a large passive vocabulary is still likely to have a larger active vocabulary than someone with a limited passive vocabulary - at least someone with the same L1.

6.5. Method of Scoring and Statistical Analysis

As in the previous experiment of learners' word associations, the responses produced in this study were classified as **syntagmatic**, **paradigmatic**, **clang** or **"other" responses**. Again, the category "other" comprised a number of subcategories such as responses being repetitious, anomalous, unclassifiable or responses being influenced by the subjects' L1. A separate subcategory was introduced for responses where the stimulus word had probably been misinterpreted as another word. These are interesting responses worth studying in more detail.

The specific criteria for assigning a response to a particular category were the same as those described in Chapter four. Also the statistical approach was largely the same as in the first experiment. The percentage of paradigmatic responses was calculated for each subject out of his total number of syntagmatic and paradigmatic responses. The results for the other two response categories of clang associates and "other" responses were not based on percentages but on the total number of these response types for each subject. However, as these categories turned out to be even smaller than in the first experiment, it seemed reasonable to treat them as a single category. This category will henceforth be referred to as **unusual responses**. For each group, the mean percentage of paradigmatic responses as well as the mean number of unusual responses were calculated for both the frequent and the infrequent words. Individual results as well as means are given in Tables 6 and 7 in the appendices, where the clang and "other" responses are also treated separately.

These data were also submitted to an analysis of variance to find out whether there were any statistically significant differences in the way the two groups responded to the frequent and the infrequent words. The results for the two main response categories and the unusual responses are reported separately below.

6.6 Test Results

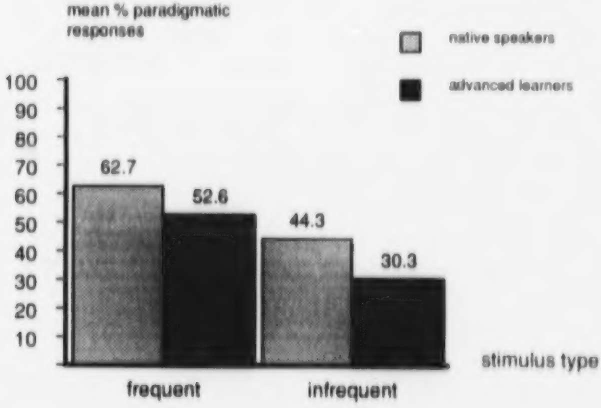
(a) Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic Responses

In this study as in the previous one, most of the responses were classified as either syntagmatic or paradigmatic. However, the proportion of these response types seemed to differ for the frequent and the infrequent words as well as for the two test groups, as indeed was expected. As for the frequent words, the percentage of paradigmatic responses was 62.7 for the native speakers and 52.6 for the advanced learners. However, both groups clearly produced a lower percentage of paradigmatic responses for the set of infrequent words, 44.3 for the native speakers and 30.3 for the advanced learners. These results are summarized in Table 4 and Figure 4.

Table 4.
The mean percentage of paradigmatic responses

	frequent words	**infrequent words**
native speakers	62.7%	44.3%
advanced learners	52.6%	30.3%

Figure 4.
The proportion of paradigmatic responses



These data were also submitted to an analysis of variance, in which the main effects were **group** (native speakers/advanced learners) and **word frequency** (frequent/infrequent).

In fact, this analysis revealed no significant group effect [$F(1,54) = 3.48$]. Due to large individual variation within the two groups, the above differences between the groups were not good enough to tell the two groups apart. However, there was a highly significant frequency effect for these response types, [$F(1,54) = 86.54$, $p < .001$]. Inspection of Table 4 shows that both groups consistently produced fewer paradigmatic responses for the infrequent words than for the frequent words. However, the interaction between group and frequency was non-significant, [$F(1,54) < 1$] . In other words, there was not a significant difference between the groups in the way they produced syntagmatic and paradigmatic responses for either the frequent or the infrequent words.

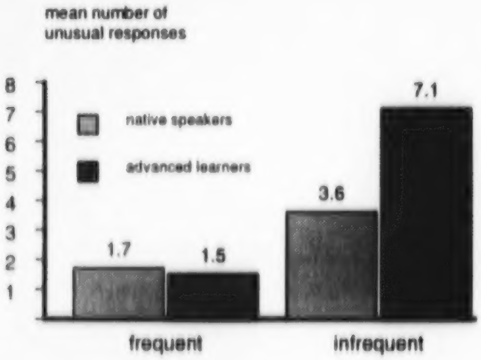
(b) Unusual Responses

Certain differences were to be found also for the clang responses and "other" responses, which had been treated as a single category, unusual responses. For the set of frequent words the native speakers produced a mean number of 1.7 and the learners an only slightly lower figure of 1.5. However, the infrequent words resulted in a larger mean number of unusual responses for both groups, 3.6 for the native speakers and 7.1 for the advanced learners. These data are summarized in Table 5 and Figure 5.

Table 5.
The mean number of unusual responses.

	frequent words	**infrequent words**
native speakers	1.7	3.6
advanced learners	1.5	7.1

Figure 5.
The mean number of unusual responses



Despite the small number of unusual responses, these data were also submitted to an analysis of variance, with main effects group and frequency. However, the low level of responses in this category means that the data needs to be treated with some caution.

Unlike the data for syntagmatic and paradigmatic responses, this analysis did reveal a significant group effect, $[F(1,54) = 9.44, p = .003]$. Inspection of Table 5 shows that the advanced learners produced a larger proportion of unusual responses than the native speakers. The frequency effect was also very highly significant, $[F(1,54) = 59.56, p < .001]$. Both groups consistently reacted with fewer unusual responses to the frequent than to the infrequent words. However, the group by frequency interaction effect turned out to be also highly significant $[F(1,54) = 13.79, p < .001]$. Inspection of Figure 5 suggests that for frequent items there is no difference between the two groups whereas there is a very large difference for infrequent items. The advanced learners produced significantly more unusual responses than the native speakers when the stimuli were infrequent words.

These results are of considerable interest, and they will be discussed in more depth in the following chapter.

7. THEORETICAL DISCUSSION CONTINUED

Experiment 2 was carried out to test some of the assumptions based on the first experimental part of the study. In this chapter the results of this experiment will be discussed and related to the framework of lexical development suggested in a previous chapter. The outcome of the experiment clearly supports the basic assumption that there would be different response patterns for frequent and infrequent words even though the subjects in question were advanced learners of English as well as adult native speakers.

As expected, both groups produced a larger proportion of paradigmatic than syntagmatic responses for the frequent words and a smaller proportion of paradigmatic responses for the infrequent words. The infrequent words also elicited more unusual responses from both groups than the frequent words. These differences were established through an analysis of variance, which showed a significant frequency effect for all response categories. This suggests that the relative difficulty of the task involved would influence the choice of response type more than the level of proficiency of the subjects.

It was assumed, however, that there would be a difference between the two groups for the infrequent words, in particular. While the response patterns of the advanced learners would not necessarily differ from those of the native speakers for the set of very frequent words, the infrequent words were expected to create a larger difference between the two groups. As for the syntagmatic and paradigmatic responses, however, there was no significant difference between the two groups, neither for the frequent words, nor for the infrequent words. Though Table 4 in the previous chapter suggests such differences, the large individual variation within the groups makes the differences between the groups non-significant. In fact, there does not seem to be a clear preference for syntagmatic or paradigmatic responses in either of the two groups. Surprisingly, some of the subjects, both learners and native speakers, produced a majority of syntagmatic responses for both the frequent and the infrequent words, however, with slightly more syntagmatic responses for the infrequent words. Others produced a predominance of paradigmatic responses for both frequency types with an only slightly smaller proportion of paradigmatic responses for the infrequent words. Consequently, only some of the subjects behaved quite according to the expectations in this respect.

As for the unusual responses, however, there was hardly any difference between the two groups for the frequent words whereas they differed markedly for the infrequent words. The advanced learners produced significantly more unusual responses than the native speakers when the words were infrequent, which was established by a highly significant group by frequency interaction effect. It is important to note that there was also a very strong negative correlation ($v = -.7853$, $N = 28$, $p<.01$> between the number of unusual responses produced by the L2-learners and their respective scores on the computerized vocabulary test used to measure the vocabulary size of these learners. The higher someone scored on the computerized test, the fewer unusual responses did he produce in the word association test. It seems as if native speakers and proficient foreign language learners could clearly be distinguished on the basis of the number of unusual responses they produce for infrequent words in a word association test.

How then do these findings apply to the framework of lexical development presented in Chapter five?

In the discussion of the first experiment, it was suggested that the choice of a particular response type may be more a function of the particular words being tested than age or overall language proficiency. The results of Experiment 2 do offer some fairly unequivocal evidence in support of this claim. If response type had only been conditioned by the age and level of proficiency of the subjects there should not have been any difference between the response patterns for frequent and infrequent words, which indeed there was. Whereas hardly any unusual responses were produced for the frequent words, the infrequent words gave rise to a larger number of such responses for both groups. Among the advanced learners, in particular, many of the infrequent words evoked either clang associates, anomalous or repetitious responses, or responses where the stimulus had probably been misinterpreted in some way. This suggests that at least some of the advanced learners did not possess a very high level of lexical knowledge of the stimulus words in question. On the other hand, the high negative correlation between the computerized vocabulary test and the number of unusual responses for the advanced learners indicates that the higher the proficiency of the learner was, the more familiar the infrequent words were to him and the fewer unusual responses did he therefore produce.

It is interesting to note that more than half of the 30 infrequent words evoked one or more clang associates from the group of advanced learners whereas not even a third of these stimuli accounted for the clang responses produced by the native speakers. Typical examples of clang associates were BRITTLE - **brattle**, CANDID - **candle**, BRASH - **brush**, BRAWNY - **brown**, SERENE - **severe**, WEEDY - **seedy**, CURSORY - **curse** and SLENDER - **tender**. The clang associates produced by each group are shown in Appendices 13 and 14. It should be pointed out that when asked afterwards, most of the subjects claimed to have at least a rough idea of the meaning of the stimulus words in question.

Other interesting responses worth looking at were cases where the stimulus word had obviously been misinterpreted as another word. Such cases were to be found among the subjects of both groups. Some typical examples of this were ELIGIBLE - **handwriting** (illegible), CANDID - **light** (candle), CANDID - **sweet** (candy) and CURSORY - **gruff** (curse). The words in brackets are the words which the subjects are likely to have thought of. The most frequently misinterpreted stimulus word in both groups was URBANE, which evoked responses connected to the word URBAN, such as **rural**, **area**, **landscape** and **town**. All examples of this kind are compiled in Appendix 15. Similar findings of misinterpretations have been reported by Meara (1978) for intermediate students of French.

It is interesting to note here that the study of unusual responses has previously served a widely different purpose being used as a means of diagnosing psychiatric disorders. Compared to normal native speakers, also schizophrenic people have been found to produce a large number of clang associates and responses where the stimulus word appears to have been misunderstood. In his article "Schizophrenic Symptoms in Foreign Language Learners", Meara discusses some similarities in the language behaviour of foreign language learners and schizophrenic people. He suggests that previous work trying to distinguish schizophrenic behaviour through word association procedures and other linguistic tests involved the danger that such behaviour would appear if, for instance, bilinguals were tested in their weaker language. Meara, thus, concludes that linguistic tests may not discriminate very clearly between real schizophrenics and people operating in a weaker language (1978:42).

The infrequent words of this experiment not only elicited more unusual responses but also more syntagmatic responses from both groups than the frequent words. It may be that it is more difficult to find a synonym or an antonym for a word which is rare or vague in meaning, than to put the word in a context where it has been encountered. However, as these new data have shown, the shift from syntagmatic to paradigmatic responses is clearly not as straightforward as it may first appear to be. The fact that not even native speakers or advanced learners seem to show a clear preference for either syntagmatic or paradigmatic responses suggests that there may not be such a marked shift from syntagmatic to paradigmatic responses as has been claimed for decades. As was clearly to be seen also in Chapters four and five, the advanced learners of Experiment 1 did not produce a very strong predominance of paradigmatic responses either even though the stimuli were fairly frequent words. And, there was not a significant difference between the three most proficient groups. At least for adult native speakers and advanced learners, there seems to be a fairly stable balance between syntagmatic and paradigmatic responses when the stimulus words are frequent. However, in the same way as advanced language users tend to produce a somewhat smaller proportion of paradigmatic responses for infrequent words, frequent words have been found to elicit a predominance of syntagmatic responses from beginning learners and children. Perhaps some infrequent words are as unfamiliar to advanced learners and even adult native speakers as many frequent words are to beginning learners and children.

Due to the fact that not even adult native speakers or advanced learners show a strong predominance of paradigmatic responses for frequent words, it may not be the case at all that the highest level of lexical knowledge is always represented by a paradigmatic response in a word association task. In fact, the production of a syntagmatic response also requires a good knowledge of the stimulus word, especially as far as collocations are concerned. It may be more accurate to claim that the individual words in the mental lexicon develop from a stage evoking clang or diverse responses to a syntagmatic or a paradigmatic stage. For this very reason, I would rather refer to these changes as a shift in response type than use the term syntagmatic - paradigmatic shift, which appears to be somewhat misleading. However, it was introduced in the early sixties and is still to be found in the most recent literature on the subject.

Anyway, the two experiments presented here provide some fairly convincing evidence of a development from unusual responses to a greater or lesser degree of syntagmatic or paradigmatic responding. It has also been established that the choice of response type is not only affected by age or level of proficiency but also by the difficulty involved in the task. Not even adult native speakers and advanced learners are equally proficient in respect of all the words in their mental lexicon. This lexicon is in a constant state of flux regardless of the level of proficiency of the learner or whether the language in question is an L1 or an L2. However, it is clearly the case that the more proficient a learner gets, the stronger the words are integrated in his lexicon and the fewer unusual responses will he produce in a word association test.

Also Stolz and Tiffany, who investigated adults' responses to frequent and infrequent words, found support for their hypothesis that the degree of unfamiliarity of the stimulus words would have an impact on the subject's choice of response type. Thus, they concluded that previously reported patterns of associations of young children are a function of the child's unfamiliarity with the stimulus words rather than his immature cognitive processes (1972:45). Interestingly enough, this study also reported an unexpectedly large number of syntagmatic associations among adults. According to the authors, there seems to be a much sharper decline in syntagmatic responses for children than for adults as the stimulus becomes more familiar. This would support the view presented above that the development is towards a greater balance of syntagmatic and paradigmatic responses rather than complete paradigmatic dominance.

In the light of what has been said so far, some of the prevailing theoretical explanations of the syntagmatic - paradigmatic shift, which were brought up in Chapter two, will be briefly commented on. Due to the large bulk of research on native speakers' word associations, most of these theories have been based on L1-speakers. The few existing L2-studies do not provide a much more illuminating view on the subject despite their advantageous position of comparing the data of L2-learners with previous L1-studies.

The phenomenon of a shift in response type has basically been related to either cognitive or linguistic development. However, judging by the L1-literature, there still does not seem to be a theoretical consensus concerning this shift. Nor is there to my knowledge a more recent revision of these theories than one published in 1977 (Nelson).

On the basis of the present investigation, there is nothing really that would support an explanation in terms of cognitive development. It has clearly been established that a shift in response type is not restricted to native speakers only, nor to a specific age or period of language learning. Indeed, attempts have been made to relate response type in word association to linguistic development and lexical development, in particular. However, a perspective of this development has been provided which is not very different from the cognitive approach.

The impression gained from the reports by Ervin and Mc Neill, for instance, is that a shift in response type would affect all the words in the mental lexicon more or less at the same time. In fact, the so called syntagmatic - paradigmatic shift has generally been assumed to take place some time between the ages of five to nine. According to this, a shift in response type as well as lexical development would primarily be a matter of age and language proficiency. The learner would possess an almost equally thorough knowledge of all the words which have entered his mental lexicon whereas a high level of proficiency would be something of a prerequisite for paradigmatic responding.

Firstly, it is most unlikely that all the words in the mental lexicon would undergo the same changes at more or less the same time. In fact, a shift in response type seems to be more a function of the particular words tested than age or language proficiency. Secondly, the trend is not necessarily towards complete paradigmatic responding but rather towards a greater balance of the two major response categories. Due to the fact that most previous studies are based on data from small children and adults, it is obvious that there were huge differences between the two groups as for the number of syntagmatic and paradigmatic responses. What is not usually commented on in these studies, however, is the fact that also the adult subjects must have produced a considerable proportion of syntagmatic responses. However, the use of very frequent words is an obvious reason why no unusual responses have been reported for adults. Consequently, the important notion of different degrees of lexical knowledge has not been taken into consideration.

The emphasis in most studies of response type is on the lexicon as a whole and a broad division into "childlike" and "adultlike" associations. Therefore, they do not accurately describe the exact nature and origin of a shift in response type, or the way words in the mental lexicon are likely to be processed. In fact, a shift of emphasis similar to the one suggested here was proposed already by Entwisle in 1966 in her study of children's word associations. Unlike all her contemporaries and most of her successors, Entwisle pointed out that all kinds of responses are found at all ages because words are constantly being acquired and consolidated linguistically. She further stated that all words may go through similar stages at a rate which depends not on age but on exposure to the word and which may be modified also by other factors (Entwisle, 1966:74). However, her contribution to the subject could have occupied a more prominent place in the literature on theory connected to a shift in response type.

Finally, some implications of this investigation for vocabulary teaching will be briefly considered. This is probably a field which would gain much from research on learning not least because many learners experience vocabulary as one of their major difficulties. It is obvious that effective teaching should largely depend on what knowledge there is of the learning process itself.

As this investigation has shown, the mental lexicon is not a fixed store of words. It is a highly flexible system, which can be either further developed or which will diminish both in size and quality if not exposed to a certain amount of linguistic input. No doubt, this is true for both learners and native speakers. Richards and Nation, who both have an interest in vocabulary teaching, are certainly right in arguing that conscious efforts to improve the vocabulary of learners should be made far beyond the elementary levels of language instruction (Richards, 1976; Nation 1983). It is not only a question of expanding the number of words in the L2-lexicon. Attention should also be paid to the semantic relationships between words and to developing a higher level of lexical knowledge of the words. Not seldom is a word put in the wrong context even by advanced learners. In fact, mistakes of this kind are part of what may distinguish a quasi native from a native speaker. Undoubtedly, the expansion of the mental lexicon is a great challenge both to the language learner and the language teacher.

8. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study arose out of an interest in shedding some light on the elusive question posed by Meara of what the learner's mental lexicon looks like, how it develops and in what respects it is similar to or different from that of a native speaker. One way of approaching this issue was to focus on a specific aspect of learners' and native speakers' word associations as potentially indicative of lexical development.

For decades the observation that young children show a predominance of syntagmatic and clang responses whereas adults produce predominantly paradigmatic responses has been referred to as the syntagmatic - paradigmatic phenomenon. However, the occurrence of a shift in response type also in the word associations of L2-learners has remained a largely unexplored area. In the first of two experiments carried out in the present investigation, the responses to 100 relatively frequent English words were collected from four groups of learners representing different levels of proficiency. These responses were classified as either syntagmatic, paradigmatic, clang associates or "other" responses. Consequently, the hypothesized changes were a decrease in syntagmatic, clang and "other" responses as well as an increase in paradigmatic responses. On the whole, the findings did support the expected changes across the four learner groups. As for the percentage of paradigmatic responses, there was a significant difference only between the least proficient group and the other three groups. These three groups also gave evidence of the expected decrease in clang responses. The low number of clang associates for the least proficient group was ascribed to the absence of more "difficult" words among the 85 stimulus words analysed for this group. However, all groups except the first-year university students showed an obvious decrease also in the number of "other" responses.

Very little attention has usually been paid to the fact that most studies of response type have dealt with sets of fairly frequent stimulus words. Undoubtedly, such frequent words will pose less difficulty for adult native speakers and proficient learners than for children or initial learners. Consequently, it was suggested that the choice of response type may be more a function of the particular stimulus words tested than age or level of proficiency. Not even adult native speakers or advanced learners can be expected to have an equally thorough knowledge of all the words in their mental lexicon. Thus, it may be more accurate to relate the phenomenon of a shift in response type to the development of individual words in the lexicon of a native speaker or foreign language learner - regardless of his level of proficiency.

Each word being acquired will have to pass different stages of development to become fully integrated, if ever, in the mental lexicon. This lexicon is in a constant state of flux in that new words are constantly being learnt while already acquired words continue to develop or may have to be relearned. Thus, the different response types obtained in a word association test could reflect the subjects' degree of lexical knowledge of the words in question. However, since lexical development is to be viewed as a lifelong process, it is highly unlikely that a shift in response type would affect all the words in the mental lexicon at the same time. Still, the mental lexicon of adult native speakers and proficient learners has got to be larger and more developed than that of children and initial learners. However, the way individual words develop is likely to be fundamentally similar whether the language being learnt is a native or a foreign language. Thus, the framework of lexical development proposed here is word-based, combining lexical development in an L1 and an L2 without restricting the task of learning words to a specific age or stage of language learning. This implies that similarities in the word associations of native speakers and L2-learners would not only exist between children and early learners of a foreign language.

However, some additional experimental data were needed to test my assumption that a shift in response type is not only a function of age and language proficiency but also of the subjects' familiarity with the stimulus words. For this purpose an equal number of adult native speakers and very advanced learners of English were tested on a set of 60 stimulus words, half of which frequent and the other half infrequent.

For the frequent words both groups were expected to produce a larger proportion of paradigmatic than syntagmatic responses and only a small number of clang and "other" responses. The infrequent words, on the other hand, would elicit a larger number of syntagmatic than paradigmatic responses as well as a considerable number of clang and "other" responses. The groups were not expected to differ as much from each other on the frequent as on the infrequent set of words. As the two minor response categories turned out to be very small, they were treated as a single category, unusual responses.

The data revealed a significant frequency effect for the syntagmatic and paradigmatic responses, i.e. both groups consistently produced a lower percentage of paradigmatic responses for the infrequent words. Somewhat surprisingly, however, none of the groups showed a very strong paradigmatic dominance for the frequent words. There was no significant group or group by frequency interaction effect either. Apparently, there was no real difference between the groups in the way they produced syntagmatic and paradigmatic responses to either the frequent or the infrequent words.

A highly significant frequency effect for the unusual responses confirmed the hypothesis that the infrequent words would elicit more clang associates and "other" responses than the frequent words. In this case also the group and the group by frequency interaction effects were most significant, i.e. the advanced learners produced significantly more unusual responses than the native speakers when the words were infrequent. On the set of frequent words, however, there was hardly any difference between the groups, as indeed was expected. Interestingly, the number of unusual responses was also negatively correlated with the scores on the computerized vocabulary test, which had been used to assess the vocabulary size of the L2-learners. The better someone scored on this test, the fewer unusual responses did he produce.

On the basis of these findings, it was established that the subjects' familiarity with the stimulus words clearly seems to have a bearing on the test results. Responses to the infrequent words, in particular, showed that not even adult native speakers and advanced learners possess the same standard of lexical knowledge for all the words in their mental lexicon. In the light of these recent findings, however, the shift from syntagmatic to paradigmatic responses is clearly not as straightforward as used to be believed. Even though there was a consistent tendency to produce fewer paradigmatic responses for the infrequent words in both groups, there was not a clear preference for syntagmatic or paradigmatic responses for either the frequent or the infrequent words. In fact, none of the two experiments gave evidence of a very strong paradigmatic dominance for the frequent words even though the subjects were proficient. This suggested that there may not be such a marked shift from syntagmatic to paradigmatic responses after all. Rather, there seems to be a fairly stable balance between the two categories at least for adult native speakers and advanced learners. At a very early stage of language learning, however, there may well be a preference for syntagmatic responses even for frequent words.

Consequently, there is reason to believe that a paradigmatic response does not necessarily represent the highest level of lexical knowledge of a particular word. In fact, there seems to be a development from clang and other unusual responses to a greater or lesser degree of paradigmatic responding. In the light of these findings, it was suggested that the term syntagmatic - paradigmatic shift should be replaced in the literature by a more general concept, such as a shift in response type. However, there are other problems as well with previous approaches to the subject. Whereas cognitive development does not seem to account for this phenomenon, most linguistic theories tend to represent the view that a shift in response type is mainly a matter of age and overall proficiency of a language. At least the ordinary reader may get the impression that all the words in the mental lexicon would be affected more or less at the same time. However, such an approach may not be accurate enough to describe the true nature and origin of a shift in response type or the way words in the mental lexicon are likely to be processed.

Finally, some implications of this investigation for the teaching of vocabulary were briefly considered. It is evident that the mental lexicon of any language learner or user is not a fixed set of words but a highly flexible system, which needs to be stimulated in order not to diminish in size and quality. Therefore, vocabulary should be worked on far beyond the early stages of language learning. Apart from extending the size of the lexicon, much attention ought to be paid also to the semantic relationships between words and to developing the learners' level of lexical knowledge.

As this investigation has shown, response type in word association is an issue which may well contribute to our understanding of the developing mental lexicon. However, future research may find it more fruitful to focus on the minor response categories of clang associates and other unusual responses than on the proportion of syntagmatic and paradigmatic responses. Obviously, this would require a test where the subjects are presented with words they are likely not to be very familiar with. However, a study of unusual responses only would have to use a much larger set of relatively infrequent or unfamiliar words than was possible here. This would also make possible the use of a wider range of form classes. To facilitate the response analysis, the subjects' knowledge of these stimuli could be tested separately, for instance with a multiple choice test. As for the design of the word association test, the stimuli should preferably be presented on a computer, which would make it possible to control the reaction time of the subjects. Anyone not able to produce a response in the given time would simply be presented with the following stimulus. The shorter the reaction time, the more spontaneous the association is likely to be.

As far as syntagmatic and paradigmatic responses are concerned, however, it may also be worth investigating whether words have different "associability indexes", i.e. whether some words are especially apt to evoke either syntagmatic or paradigmatic responses.

Finally, this investigation has not dealt with the issue of lexical storage, i.e. whether there are two separate lexical stores for the L1 and the L2 lexicon or a unified system for both languages. The extent to which this can be investigated by the means of word association procedures is left to interested readers to consider.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Blum-Kulka, S. (1981). Learning to use words: Acquiring semantic competence in a second language. In M. Nahir (ed.), *Hebrew Teaching and Applied Linguistics.* University Press of America, 243-251.

Brown, R.W. & Berko, J. (1960). Word association and the acquisition of grammar. *Child Development, 31,* 1-14.

Clark, H.H. (1970). Word associations and linguistic theory. In J. Lyons (ed.), *New Horizons in Linguistics.* Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 271-286.

Corder, P. (1973). *Introducing Applied Linguistics.* Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books.

Deese, J. (1965). *The Structure of Associations in Language and Thought.* Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.

Entwisle, D.R. (1966). *Word Associations of Young Children.* Baltimore, Md.: John Hopkins University Press.

Ervin, S. (1961). Changes with age in the verbal determinants of word association. *American Journal of Psychology, 74,* 361-372.

Hofland, K. & Johansson, S. (1982). *Word Frequencies in British and American English.* The Norwegian Computing Centre for the Humanities. Bergen.

Levenston, E. (1979). Second language vocabulary acquisition: Issues and problems. *Interlanguage Studies Bulletin - Utrecht, 4:2*, 147-160.

Lyons, J. (1977). *Semantics 1.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McNeill, D. (1970). *The Acquisition of Language.* New York: Harper & Row.

Meara, P. (1978). Learners' word associations in French. *Interlanguage Studies Bulletin - Utrecht, 3:2*, 192-211.

Meara, P. (1978). Schizophrenic symptoms in foreign language learners. *UEA Papers - Linguistics, 7*, 22-47.

Meara, P. (1980). Vocabulary acquisition: a neglected aspect of language learning. *Language Teaching and Linguistics: Abstracts, 13:4*, 221-246.

Meara, P. (1982). Word associations in a foreign language: A report on the Birkbeck Vocabulary Project. *The Nottingham Linguistic Circular, 11:2*, 29-38.

Meara, P. (1990). Some notes on the Eurocentre's Vocabulary Tests. In: J. Tommola (ed.), *Foreign Language Comprehension and Production*. Turku.

Nation, I.S.P. (1983). *Teaching and Learning Vocabulary*. Wellington, Victoria University: Newbury House.

Nelson, K. (1977). The syntagmatic-paradigmatic shift revisited: A review of research and theory. *Psychological Bulletin*, *84*, 93-116.

Palermo, D.S. (1971). Characteristics of word association responses obtained from children in grades one through four. *Developmental Psychology*, 5, 118-123.

Politzer, R.B. (1978). Paradigmatic and syntagmatic associations of first-year French students. In V. Honsa & M.J. Hardman-de-Bautista (eds.), *Papers on Linguistics and Child Language: Ruth Hirsch Weir Memorial Volume*. Mouton, 203-210.

Postman, L. & Keppel, G. (eds.), (1970). *Norms of Word Associations*. New York: Academic Press.

Randall, M. (1980). Word association behaviour in learners of English as a foreign language. *Polyglot*, *2*, fiche 2.

Richards, J.C. (1976). The role of vocabulary teaching. *Tesol Quarterly*, *10*, 77-89.

Ringbom, H. (1987).	*The Role of the First Language in Foreign Language Learning.* Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters.
Ryan, A. & Meara, P. (1992).	The case of the missing vowels. In press. *Reading in a Foreign Language.*
Stolz, W.S. & Tiffany, J. (1972).	The production of "childlike" word associations by adults to unfamiliar adjectives. *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behaviour, 11*, 38-46.
Söderman, T. (1988).	Word associations in learners and native speakers - a shift in response type and its relevance for a theory of lexical development. Unpublished master's thesis. Åbo Akademi University.
Söderman, T. (1989).	Word associations of foreign language learners and native speakers - a shift in response type and its relevance for a theory of lexical development. *Scandinavian Working Papers on Bilingualism, 8*, 114-121.
Takala, S. (1984).	Evaluation of students' knowledge of English vocabulary in the Finnish Comprehensive School. *Reports from the Institute for Educational Research, 350.* University of Jyväskylä

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Instructions for Experiment 1

NAMN:
ÅLDER:
KLASS:

-7th graders -"Gymnasium" pupils

ÅLDER:
ÅRSKURS:
VITSORD I ENGELSKA PÅ STUDENTBETYGET:
INTAGEN TILL ÄMNE/ÄMNEN:
HAR STUDERAT FÖLJANDE ÄMNEN UNDER LÄSÅRET:

-1st-year university students

ÅLDER:
ÅRSKURS:
VITSORD I ENGELSKA PÅ STUDENTBETYGET:

-advanced students of English

På följande sidor ser du 100 engelska ord. Skriv efter varje ord **det första *engelska* ord** du kommer att tänka på. Börja med det första ordet, skriv ned det ord du först förknippar med detta ord och gå sedan vidare till följande ord. Svara alltid med endast **ett ord** och undvik att lämna ord obesvarade. Arbeta snabbt tills du slutfört uppgiften. När du gjort detta, vänd testpappret och skriv på baksidan den bokstav som står på tavlan just då.

Börja inte förrän du får klartecken.

Appendix 2

Stimulus Words for Experiment 1

NB: The words written in extra bold type were not analysed for the 7th graders.

No.	Stimulus	Response	No.	Stimulus	Response
1.	Table		26.	Wish	
2.	Dark		27.	River	
3.	Music		28.	White	
4.	Sickness		29.	Beautiful	
5.	Man		30.	Window	
6.	Deep		31.	Rough	
7.	Soft		**32.**	**Citizen**	
8.	Eating		33.	Foot	
9.	Mountain		34.	Spider	
10.	House		**35.**	**Needle**	
11.	Black		36.	Red	
12.	**Mutton**		37.	Sleep	
13.	**Comfort**		38.	Anger	
14.	Hand		**39.**	**Carpet**	
15.	Short		40.	Girl	
16.	Fruit		41.	High	
17.	Butterfly		42.	Working	
18.	**Smooth**		**43.**	**Sour**	
19.	Command		44.	Earth	
20.	Chair		45.	Trouble	
21.	Sweet		46.	Soldier	
22.	Whistle		**47.**	**Cabbage**	
23.	Woman		48.	Hard	
24.	Cold		49.	Eagle	
25.	Slow		**50.**	**Stomach**	

Stimulus Words for Experiment 1 (continued)

No.	Stimulus	Response	No.	Stimulus	Response
51.	**Stem**		76.	Bitter	
52.	Lamp		77.	Hammer	
53.	Dream		78.	Thirsty	
54.	Yellow		79.	City	
55.	Bread		80.	Square	
56.	**Justice**		81.	Butter	
57.	Boy		82.	Doctor	
58.	Light		83.	Loud	
59.	**Health**		84.	Thief	
60.	Bible		85.	Lion	
61.	Memory		86.	Joy	
62.	Sheep		87.	Bed	
63.	Bath		88.	Heavy	
64.	Cottage		89.	Tobacco	
65.	Swift		90.	Baby	
66.	Blue		91.	Moon	
67.	Hungry		**92.**	**Scissors**	
68.	Priest		93.	Quiet	
69.	Ocean		94.	Green	
70.	Head		95.	Salt	
71.	**Stove**		96.	Street	
72.	Long		97.	King	
73.	Religion		98.	Cheese	
74.	Whisky		**99.**	**Blossom**	
75.	Child		100.	Afraid	

Vänd pappret och skriv där den bokstav du ser på tavlan nu.

Appendix 3

Table 1 - Experiment 1
Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic Responses

A= 7th grade pupils
B= "Gymnasium" pupils
C= 1st-year university students
D= advanced students
%= percentage of paradigmatic responses

	A			B			C			D		
	S	P	%	S	P	%	S	P	%	S	P	%
1.	35	47	57	45	48	52	54	43	44	29	69	70
2.	31	45	59	33	57	63	39	50	56	48	50	51
3.	31	46	60	29	63	68	36	41	53	47	52	53
4.	44	34	44	47	46	49	47	38	45	26	70	73
5.	38	42	53	22	67	75	39	56	59	18	80	82
6.	34	33	49	44	49	53	38	51	57	46	54	54
7.	41	43	51	27	58	68	41	46	53	27	70	72
8.	44	34	44	40	51	56	43	52	55	41	58	59
9.	29	44	60	44	47	52	25	64	72	36	60	63
10.	37	29	44	31	61	66	38	52	58	22	71	76
11.	32	28	47	56	28	33	49	43	47	22	78	78
12.	39	22	36	29	58	67	38	55	59	31	67	68
13.	32	35	52	46	40	47	29	58	67	51	47	48
14.	40	15	27	31	64	67	29	60	67	41	57	58
15.	39	36	48	30	59	66	43	51	54	43	56	57
16.	36	36	50	51	49	49	41	49	54	44	52	54
17.	39	40	51	40	40	50	27	56	67	32	66	67
18.	32	53	62	34	43	56	39	53	58	30	68	69
19.	45	28	38	31	55	64	45	43	49	40	57	59
20.	23	53	70	47	43	48	48	46	49	35	60	63
21.	43	40	48	20	60	75	25	67	73	33	60	65
22.	31	43	58	62	26	30	30	41	58	40	60	60
23.	18	44	71	28	57	67	38	50	57	36	44	55
24.	34	45	57	46	47	51	43	41	49	52	48	48
25.	38	35	48	21	72	77	33	54	62	21	76	78
26.	42	25	37	27	66	71	20	78	80	44	46	51
27.	46	27	37	32	65	67	34	53	61	46	48	51
28.	27	32	54	57	32	36	25	66	73	42	51	55

	$\sum$	$\bar{x}$	$\sum$	$\bar{x}$	$\sum$	$\bar{x}$	$\sum$	$\bar{x}$
S=	1000	35.7	1050	37.5	1036	37.0	1023	36.5
P=	1034	37.0	1451	51.8	1457	52.0	1675	59.8
%=	1412	50.4	1623	58.0	1636	58.4	1737	62.0

Appendix 4

Tables 2 & 3 - Experiment 1
Clang Associates and "Other" Responses

A= 7th grade pupils	B= "Gymnasium" pupils
C= 1st-year university students	D= advanced students

	2. clang responses				3. "other" responses			
	A	B	C	D	A	B	C	D
1.	-	-	-	-	3	7	3	2
2.	2	3	3	-	7	7	8	2
3.	1	7	15	-	7	1	8	1
4.	1	4	1	1	6	3	14	3
5.	-	7	1	-	5	4	4	2
6.	12	5	-	-	6	2	11	-
7.	-	-	7	1	1	15	6	2
8.	-	3	1	-	7	6	4	1
9.	3	6	-	-	9	3	11	4
10.	11	3	1	2	8	5	9	5
11.	7	1	-	-	18	15	8	-
12.	7	-	1	-	17	13	6	2
13.	2	6	6	-	16	8	7	2
14.	6	4	-	-	24	1	11	2
15.	1	4	3	1	9	7	3	-
16.	3	-	-	-	10	-	10	4
17.	-	10	5	-	6	10	12	2
18.	-	5	2	-	-	18	6	2
19.	1	2	2	-	11	12	10	3
20.	2	4	1	1	7	6	5	4
21.	1	1	1	3	1	19	7	4
22.	2	6	21	-	9	6	8	-
23.	1	9	6	5	22	6	6	15
24.	-	2	4	-	6	5	12	-
25.	1	-	3	-	11	7	10	3
26.	3	3	-	5	15	4	2	5
27.	1	1	1	2	11	2	12	4
28.	5	1	3	1	21	10	6	6
Σ=	73	97	88	22	273	202	219	80
$\bar{x}$=	2.6	3.5	3.1	0.8	9.8	7.2	7.8	2.9

Appendix 5

Clang Responses - 7th Graders

Stimulus	Response	Total
AFRAID	*Africa*	1
ANGER	*agent*	1
	angel	1
	another	1
	banger	1
BITTER	*better*	2
	bit	2
BUTTER	*boat*	1
	but	2
BUTTERFLY	*butter*	1
CHAIR	*claire*	1
	hair	2
CHEESE	*chose*	2
COLD	*could*	1
COTTAGE	*cotton*	1
DEEP	*keep*	2
EAGLE	*beagle*	1
	earth	1
	east	1
EARTH	*either*	1
	heart	1
	north	1
FOOT	*tooth*	1
HAND	*land*	1
HIGH	*fight*	1
JOY	*joey*	1
	toy	1
MEMORY	*many*	1
PRIEST	*prize*	2
QUIET	*queen*	1
	queue	1
RIVER	*driver*	1
ROUGH	*enough*	1
	laugh	1
	rouge	1
SHEEP	*sleep*	2
SLOW	*snow*	3
SOLDIER	*sun*	1
SPIDER	*speed*	2
	spook	1
SQUARE	*squash*	3
	quart	1
	queue	1
SWIFT	*ski-lift*	2
	soft	1
	swing	2

Clang Responses - 7th Graders

(continued)

Stimulus	**Response**	**Total**
TABLE	*take*	1
THIEF	*things*	1
THIRSTY	*thirty*	1
TROUBLE	*bubble*	1
	tra	1
WHISKY	*wish*	1
WHISTLE	*castle*	1
	wissle	1
WISH	*fish*	2
	wash	1
	whisky	1
	Total =	73

Appendix 6

Clang Responses - "Gymnasium" Pupils

NB: The stimulus words excluded for the 7th graders are given in extra bold type

Stimulus	Response	Total
AFRAID	*Africa*	3
ANGER	*angel*	1
BITTER	*better*	1
	butter	2
BLOSSOM	*bloss*	1
	Boston	1
	bottom	1
CABBAGE	*bag*	1
	baggage	4
	damage	1
	garage	1
	luggage	4
CARPET	*carpenter*	3
CHAIR	*hair*	1
CHEESE	*goose*	1
COTTAGE	*college*	1
	cotton	1
HIGH	*dry*	1
JUSTICE	*juice*	2
MUTTON	*button*	9
	cotton	2
	mother	1
	mutant	1
	tone	1

Stimulus	Response	Total
NEEDLE	*knee*	1
	need	2
PRIEST	*prize*	2
SCISSORS	*scream*	1
	see	1
SHEEP	*sheet*	1
SICKNESS	*darkness*	1
SMOOTH	*mouth*	3
	smog	1
	smoke	1
	tooth	3
SOUR	*four*	3
	pour	4
	sir	1
	sore	1
	soup	1
	tour	1
STEM	*item*	1
	stamp	1
	steam	1
	step	1
	stone	2
STOMACH	*headache*	1
STOVE	*above*	3
	dove	2
	glove	1
	grove	1

Clang Responses - "Gymnasium" Pupils (continued)

Stimulus	Response	Total
STOVE	*stone*	1
(continued)	*starve*	1
SWIFT	*lift*	1
	shift	2
	sweet	1
	Switzerland	1
WHISTLE	*white*	1
WINDOW	*pillow*	1
WISH	*fish*	1

Total = 97 $\bar{x}$= 3.5

NB: The total is 24 and the mean number 0.9 if the stimulus words in extra bold type are excluded.

Appendix 7

Clang Responses - First-year University Students

NB: The stimulus words excluded for the 7th graders are given in extra bold type.

Stimulus	Response	Total
ANGER	*nigger*	1
BEAUTIFUL	*full*	1
BIBLE	*bee*	1
BLOSSOM	*bloss*	1
	bosom	1
	hansom	1
CABBAGE	*baggage*	3
	care	1
	garbage	1
CARPET	*car*	1
	carpenter	2
CHAIR	*hair*	1
CHEESE	*chose*	1
COTTAGE	*age*	2
DARK	*park*	2
EAGLE	*eager*	1
EARTH	*art*	1
EATING	*beating*	1
FOOT	*tooth*	1
HAMMER	*ham*	2
HEALTH	*heavy*	1
HUNGRY	*Hungary*	1
JUSTICE	*ice*	1
LAMP	*lamb*	1
LOUD	*crowd*	1
	proud	1
MAN	*can*	1
MOON	*soon*	1
MUTTON	*button*	5
	cotton	1
	mother	2
	mute	1
NEEDLE	*need*	3
PRIEST	*primary*	1
	prize	1
SHEEP	*deep*	2
	share	1
SHORT	*shirt*	1
SLEEP	*sheep*	1
SMOOTH	*smog*	1
	smurfs	1
	tooth	2
SOLDIER	*solid*	1

Clang Responses - First-year University Students (continued)

Stimulus	Response	Total
SOUR	*pour*	1
	soul	1
	sound	1
	soup	1
	sure	1
	tour	1
SPIDER	*speed*	1
	spy	1
STEM	*steam*	1
	stone	3
	study	1
	team	1
STOVE	*blowe*	1
	steal	1
	stomach	1
	stone	2
SWIFT	*lift*	1
	shift	1
	swing	3
TABLE	*take*	1
THIEF	*throat*	1
THIRSTY	*nasty*	1
WHISTLE	*waste*	1
WISH	*which*	2

Total = 88 $x = 3.1$

NB: The total is 42 and the mean number 1.5 if the stimulus words in extra bold type are excluded.

Appendix 8

Clang Responses - Advanced Students
(Experiment 1)

NB: The stimulus words excluded for the 7th graders are given in extra bold type.

Stimulus	Response	Total	Stimulus	Response	Total
AFRAID	*Africa*	1	JOY	*coy*	1
ANGER	*danger*	1	QUIET	*quite*	1
BEAUTIFUL	*burden*	1	SLEEP	*sheep*	2
BLOSSOM	*bottom*	1	**STOVE**	*stone*	1
CABBAGE	*baggage*	1	SWIFT	*swing*	1
	luggage	1			
			THIEF	*chief*	1
CARPET	*carpenters*	2		*thick*	1
CHILD	*Chile*	1	TROUBLE	*bubble*	1
HARD	*bard*	1	WINDOW	*widow*	2
HEALTH	*tooth*	1			

Total = 22 $\bar{x} = 0.8$

NB: The total is 15 and the mean number 0.5 if the stimulus words in extra bold type are excluded.

Appendix 9

Rate of Frequency for the Stimulus Words of Experiment 2 according to Hofland and Johansson (1982)

	frequent	occurrence per million		infrequent	occurrence per million
1.	old	670	31.	slender	10
2.	right	599	32.	coarse	9
3.	large	435	33.	saturated	9
4.	high	378	34.	eligible	8
5.	certain	337	35.	pungent	7
6.	kind	302	36.	radiant	7
7.	full	291	37.	barren	6
8.	common	286	38.	conspicuous	6
9.	early	283	39.	brittle	5
10.	white	280	40.	strenuous	5
11.	short	230	41.	candid	4
12.	alone	218	42.	contagious	4
13.	hard	214	43.	defiant	4
14.	near	207	44.	dire	4
15.	similar	175	45.	haunting	4
16.	easy	168	46.	serene	4
17.	fine	167	47.	brash	3
18.	strong	163	48.	brawny	3
19.	cold	155	49.	fragrant	3
20.	wide	148	50.	staunch	3
21.	previous	136	51.	weedy	3
22.	happy	130	52.	ardent	2
23.	single	123	53.	assorted	2
24.	quiet	79	54.	dainty	2
25.	quick	71	55.	docile	2
26.	dry	69	56.	lurid	2
27.	thick	69	57.	sluggish	2
28.	rich	67	58.	cursory	1
29.	pure	57	59.	furtive	1
30.	anxious	54	60.	urbane	1

Appendix 10

Stimulus Words for Experiment 2

NB: Words number 9, 21, 39 and 52 were filler words.

No.	Stimulus	Response	No.	Stimulus	Response
1.	quick		33.	radiant	
2.	old		34.	dainty	
3.	defiant		35.	sluggish	
4.	brittle		36.	common	
5.	candid		37.	full	
6.	thick		38.	high	
7.	early		39.	abdicate	
8.	certain		40.	eligible	
9.	drive		41.	ardent	
10.	fragrant		42.	cursory	
11.	assorted		43.	rich	
12.	brash		44.	wide	
13.	similar		45.	single	
14.	short		46.	lurid	
15.	kind		47.	strenuous	
16.	contagious		48.	dire	
17.	haunting		49.	happy	
18.	brawny		50.	anxious	
19.	right		51.	quiet	
20.	hard		52.	rectify	
21.	twinkle		53.	pungent	
22.	saturated		54.	furtive	
23.	coarse		55.	slender	
24.	serene		56.	previous	
25.	alone		57.	pure	
26.	white		58.	dry	
27.	cold		59.	staunch	
28.	conspicuous		60.	docile	
29.	barren		61.	urbane	
30.	weedy		62.	easy	
31.	large		63.	fine	
32.	strong		64.	near	

Appendix 11

Table 6 - Experiment 2
Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic Responses

A= native speakers B= advanced learners
%= percentage of paradigmatic responses

	- frequent words						- infrequent words					
	A			B			A			B		
	S	P	%	S	P	%	S	P	%	S	P	%
1.	4	25	86	21	6	22	3	24	89	24	3	11
2.	5	25	83	2	27	93	14	13	48	16	9	36
3.	18	11	38	5	23	82	25	5	17	6	19	76
4.	19	7	27	8	22	73	30	-	0	16	11	41
5.	16	11	41	17	13	43	23	4	15	22	3	12
6.	16	12	43	15	14	48	23	6	21	23	5	18
7.	22	6	21	9	20	69	23	4	15	23	4	15
8.	-	29	100	12	18	60	10	18	64	24	4	14
9.	10	17	63	14	16	53	16	5	24	17	9	35
10.	16	13	45	11	13	54	25	3	11	15	11	42
11.	9	20	69	21	7	25	10	14	58	26	2	7
12.	24	4	14	-	30	100	27	2	7	7	16	70
13.	3	27	90	21	6	22	12	13	52	19	5	21
14.	2	25	93	6	24	80	8	14	64	4	22	85
15.	1	29	97	18	11	38	11	14	56	17	4	19
16.	16	11	41	2	28	93	13	12	48	12	8	40
17.	11	18	62	21	6	22	12	16	57	22	3	12
18.	11	18	62	20	8	29	13	14	52	20	4	17
19.	7	22	76	19	10	34	18	8	31	20	4	17
20.	8	21	72	22	6	21	11	13	54	18	2	10
21.	13	14	52	28	1	3	16	9	36	23	1	4
22.	19	8	30	20	7	26	16	7	30	15	1	6
23.	6	24	80	22	4	15	8	21	72	13	5	28
24.	6	23	79	11	19	63	5	17	77	7	6	46
25.	4	23	85	10	18	64	5	21	81	11	6	35
26.	13	13	50	-	30	100	17	10	37	9	14	61
27.	-	30	100	3	26	90	3	27	90	6	8	57
28.	12	16	57	14	14	50	18	9	33	14	4	14
	Σ		x	Σ		x	Σ		x	Σ		x
S=	291		10.4	372		13.3	415		14.8	449		16.0
P=	502		17.9	427		15.3	323		11.5	193		6.9
%=	1756		62.7	1472		52.6	1239		44.3	849		30.3

Appendix 12

Table 7 - Experiment 2 - Unusual Responses

A= native speakers B= advanced learners
Cl= clang responses O= "other" responses
Score = computerized vocabulary test
advanced learners only

	- frequent words				- infrequent words				
	A		B		A		B		
	Cl	O	Cl	O	Cl	O	Cl	O	- score
1.	1	-	-	3	-	3	1	2	9886
2.	-	-	-	1	-	3	1	4	9858
3.	-	1	-	2	-	-	-	5	9814
4.	-	4	-	-	-	-	1	2	9771
5.	-	3	-	-	-	3	2	3	9769
6.	-	2	-	1	-	1	-	2	9657
7.	1	1	-	1	-	3	1	2	9556
8.	-	1	-	-	-	2	-	2	9553
9.	2	1	-	-	4	5	-	4	9519
10.	-	1	-	6	1	1	-	4	9445
11.	-	1	-	2	2	4	1	1	9412
12.	-	2	-	-	-	1	-	7	9354
13.	-	-	-	3	-	5	-	6	9345
14.	-	3	-	-	-	8	-	4	9280
15.	-	-	-	1	-	5	-	9	9148
16.	-	3	-	-	1	4	5	5	9088
17.	-	1	-	3	-	2	-	5	9067
18.	-	1	-	2	1	2	1	5	8989
19.	-	1	1	-	1	3	-	6	8880
20.	-	1	-	2	2	4	1	9	8610
21.	-	3	-	1	1	4	2	4	8567
22.	-	3	-	3	-	7	3	11	8742
23.	-	-	-	4	1	-	3	9	8411
24.	-	1	-	-	-	8	10	7	8296
25.	-	3	-	2	-	4	1	12	8282
26.	1	3	-	-	1	2	1	6	8235
27.	-	-	-	1	-	-	8	8	7994
28.	1	1	-	2	2	1	1	11	7319
$\sum=$	6	41	1	40	17	85	43	155	
Cl+O=	47		41		102		198		
$x=$	1.7		1.5		3.6		7.1		

Appendix 13

Clang Responses - Native Speakers (Experiment 2)

-frequent words

Stimulus	**Response**	**Total**
ALONE	*clone*	1
EASY	*peasy*	4
THICK	*stick*	1
	Total =	6

-infrequent words

Stimulus	**Response**	**Total**
BRASH	*brush*	1
	flash	2
BRAWNY	*brain*	2
	brainy	1
CONSPICUOUS	*consumption*	1
DAINTY	*doily*	1
	daisy	1
DOCILE	*dopey*	1
LURID	*lewd*	2
	loud	1
STAUNCH	*paunch*	1
	stoic	2
WEEDY	*wimp*	1
	Total =	17

Appendix 14

Clang Responses - Advanced Learners
(Experiment 2)

-frequent words

Stimulus	Response	Total
EASY	*quesy*	1

-infrequent words

Stimulus	Response	Total	Stimulus	Response	Total
BRASH	*bright*	2	PUNGENT	*mugent*	1
	brush	3		*punctual*	2
				purse	1
BRAWNY	*bread*	1			
	brown	1	SATURATED	*Saturnus*	1
BRITTLE	*brattle*	1	SERENE	*severe*	1
	broom	1		*magazine*	1
CANDID	*candle*	1	SLENDER	*tender*	1
	candy	2			
			SLUGGISH	*rubbish*	1
COARSE	*cough*	2		*slime*	2
CONSPICUOUS	*conspiracy*	1	STAUNCH	*launch*	1
	spy	2		*paunch*	2
CURSORY	*curse*	1	URBANE	*urban*	1
DOCILE	*docent*	1	WEEDY	*seedy*	1
	doll	1		*windy*	1
	domicile	1			
ELIGIBLE	*elegy*	1			
FURTIVE	*effort*	1			
	fur	1			
	furious	2			

Total = 43

Appendix 15

Cases of Misinterpreted Stimulus Words
Experiment 2

NB: The words in brackets are those which the subjects are likely to have thought of.

-native speakers

Stimulus	Response	Total	
BRAWNY	*pate*	1	(brain)
CANDID	*floss*	1	(candy)
	sweet	1	- - -
CURSORY	*gruff*	2	(coarse)
	evil	1	(curse)
	swear	1	- - -
FURTIVE	*ardour*	1	(fervour)
URBANE	*area*	1	(urban)
	city	2	- - -
	crowded	1	- - -
	town	6	- - -
	Total =	18	

-advanced learners

Stimulus	Response	Total	
CANDID	*light*	2	(candle)
CURSORY	*computer*	1	(cursor)
	typewriter	1	- - -
DOCILE	*home*	1	(domestic)
	sleepy	1	(doze)
ELIGIBLE	*handwriting*	1	(illegible)
	letter	1	- - -
FURTIVE	*coat*	1	(fur)
	land	1	(fertile)

Cases of Misinterpreted Stimulus Words (Exp. 2) (continued)

Stimulus	Response	Total	
SATURATED	*Sunday*	1	(Saturday)
SERENE	*earnest*	1	(sincere)
URBANE	*area*	1	(urban)
	city	9	- - -
	country	1	- - -
	landscape	1	- - -
	London	1	- - -
	rural	2	- - -
	town	1	- - -
	Total =	28	

Tove Waller

CHARACTERISTICS OF NEAR-NATIVE PROFICIENCY IN WRITING

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION 187
- 1.1. Background 188
- 1.2. Definition of "near-nativeness" 189
- 1.3. Previous research 191

2. THE STUDY 193
- 2.1. Aim of study 193
- 2.2. The material 193
- 2.3. The method 194

3. STATISTICS 195
- 3.1. General results 195
- 3.2. Native subjects and their individual grading of the texts 198
  - 3.2.1. Native subject I 199
  - 3.2.2. Native subject II 200
  - 3.2.3. Native subject III 202
  - 3.2.4. Native subject IV 204
  - 3.2.5. Native subject V 205
  - 3.2.6. Native subject VI 207
  - 3.2.7. Native subject VII 208
  - 3.2.8. Native subject VIII 209
  - 3.2.9. Native subject IX 210
  - 3.2.10. Native subject X 211
  - 3.2.11. Native subject XI 212
  - 3.2.12. Native subject XII 213
  - 3.2.13. Native subject XIII 214

4. LEXICAL FEATURES 216
- 4.1. Lexical variation 217
- 4.2. Lexical density 219
- 4.3. Lexical sophistication 221

187

4.4. Specific lexical problems 223
- 4.4.1. Collocations 223
- 4.4.2. Nouns 226
- 4.4.3. Verbs 228
- 4.4.4. Adjectives 231
- 4.4.5. Adverbs 233
- 4.4.6. Pronouns 234
- 4.4.7. Prepositions 234
- 4.4.8. Other lexical problems 235

5. SYNTACTIC FEATURES 236

5.1. Singular/plural 239
- 5.1.1. Incorrect pluralization of noun 239
- 5.1.2. Missing concord between noun and verb 240
- 5.1.3. Lack of deictic concord 241

5.2. Article usage 241
- 5.2.1. Articles instead of pronouns 241
- 5.2.2. Definite vs. indefinite articles 242
- 5.2.3. Overuse of articles 242
- 5.2.4. Omitting to use necessary articles 243

5.3. Prepositions and prepositional phrases 243
- 5.3.1. Incorrect prepositions 244
- 5.3.2. Omitted or unnecessary prepositions 245
- 5.3.3. Maladroitly used prepositions 245

5.4. Genitive 246

5.5. Pronouns 246

5.6. Punctuation 247

5.7. Tense and aspect 247
- 5.7.1. Mixed tenses within a sentence or paragraph 248
- 5.7.2. Discord between verb and adverb 248
- 5.7.3. Aspect (progressive vs. non-progressive forms) 248
- 5.7.4. Other problems of tense 249

5.8. Phrase (sentence) structure and word order 249
6. CONCEPTUAL CONFUSION AND RHETORICAL "INEPTITUDE" 253
7. OTHER FEATURES OF NON-NATIVENESS 258
8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS 260
9. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH 262
BIBLIOGRAPHY 263
APPENDICES 268

1. INTRODUCTION

I have always been fascinated by spy stories. During my first year of English studies at Åbo Akademi, one of my teachers said that only two categories of people need a perfect pronunciation of a foreign language: spies and teachers. Acquiring a perfect pronunciation of a foreign language is extremely difficult, as I know from personal experience, at least unless one learns the language in question as a child. Most teachers don't have a perfect pronunciation; some accent is almost always perceptible. I don't know any spies, at least not that I am aware of, but I suppose that they really have a perfect command of the language in question, since it is a matter of life and death for them, literally. Not only do they need a perfect pronunciation, they need a perfect, exactly native-like command of the language in all respects. This is one of the parts of spy stories I have always found extremely fascinating - their ability to speak with an accent that can be traced even to a particular village in a country they may not even have visited. John le Carré's *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* contains a passage where Leamas's ability to do exactly that is stressed, and I remember wishing I could do that... A perfect command of a language is not equal to a native-like command of the same language. Often a highly competent, well-educated non-native speaker will use a variety of the language that is hyper-correct and over-polished. The comment "you speak better than I do" is one that several non-native speakers have heard from native speakers. As a non-native speaker of a language, one tends to follow the rules very strictly, to avoid more colloquial expressions, and to keep to known premises: i.e. not to experiment very freely. These strategies usually lead to very "good" language, which may, however, well be discernible as non-native language. The spy, then, would have to be a true bilingual (or, probably most preferably, multi-lingual) in all aspects of the word, linguistic as well as cultural. According to Selinker (1972), a mere 5% of foreign language learners reach this level. Most people do not plan to become spies, and for them a lesser degree of "bilingualism" will suffice.

Many people have studied English for many years, they use English as their working language, they may have spent quite some time in an English-speaking country, they may have friends and relatives living abroad whom they keep in touch with and meet fairly often - in short, English may be a very important factor in thier lives. These people may be called near-native speakers of English, and it is this category of speakers this thesis deals with. I leave the CIA, the KGB, and their "colleagues" to deal with the agents' linguistic problems, and concentrate my efforts on the near-native English speakers involved in this investigation.

1.1 Background

This thesis is part of a project dealing with near-native proficiency conducted at the English Department of Abo Akademi. My task has been the analyzing of near-native features of written texts. There has been very little research in the area; whereas quite a lot has been done in the field of bilingualism and in the field of language learners on a lower level of sophistication, so called "near-natives" have been left much alone. Of course, in some research on bilingualism they have been included as bilinguals (cf. Kirschner 1984, Mackey in Beardsmore 1982), but their particular proficiency level has not been studied in detail. Coppieters (1987) studied the level of competence of near-native speakers of French, a study which has been of great interest to me, mainly perhaps because the perceived difference in competence should lead to a difference also in performance, and I believe his subjects can quite well be compared to those included in this study. This will be further commented on in chapter 1.3.

I find this area especially interesting from the point of view of foreign language teaching, especially on an advanced (university) level, as the goal of foreign language teaching at such a high level is to produce highly competent speakers. Has the system reached that goal, and if it has not, how could it possibly be changed so as to meet the requirements? In order to answer these questions, a definition of native proficiency would be of great use, but native proficiency has not been satisfactorily defined as of yet. Pawley and Syder, quoted by Yorio "make a distinction between *native-like selection* and *native-like fluency*. Native-like selection is defined as 'the ability of the native speaker routinely to convey his meaning by an expression that is not only grammatical but also native-like; what is puzzling about this is how he selects a sentence that is natural and idiomatic from among the range of grammatically correct paraphrases, many of which are non-native-like or highly marked usages'. Native-like fluency is 'the native speaker's ability to produce fluent stretches of spontaneous connected discourse'. It is clear that second language learners or users are quite capable of developing native-like fluency. ... Native-like selection, however, is another matter. Of its two components, grammaticality and idiomaticity, only the former is well-understood, or at least easily identified through the absence of formal error. Idiomaticity, particularly in non-native production, appears much more elusive and difficult to describe." (Yorio, 1989: 66) It would seem then, that native proficiency would be the ability to produce grammatically and idiomatically correct English, but this is not, by any means, a clear definition. I will not offer any theories of my own on this subject, as my material is not vast enough for me to draw any definite conclusions, but my results may indicate some possible future research which might lead to a clearer definition.

1.2 Definition of "near-nativeness"

A lot of research has been done on bilingualism, and the definitions of the term are numerous and include very different features. Bloomfield writes: "In ... cases where ... perfect foreign-language learning is not accompanied by loss of the native language, it results in bilingualism, native-like control of two languages. After early childhood few people have enough muscular and nervous freedom or enough opportunity and leisure to reach perfection in a foreign language; yet bilingualism of this kind is commoner than one might suppose, both in cases like those of our immigrants and as a result of travel, foreign study, or similar association. Of course one cannot define a degree of perfection at which a good foreign speaker becomes a bilingual: the distinction is relative." (Beardsmore 1982, 1) In Beardsmore's book we also find definitions given by other researchers, such as Mackey: "It seems obvious that if we are to study the phenomenon of bilingualism we are forced to consider it as something entirely relative. ... We shall therefore consider bilingualism as the alternate use of two or more languages by the same individual." (Beardsmore 1982, 1-2) I myself prefer the definition used by Halliday, McIntosh and Strevens (1970): they talk of *ambilingualism* to describe a person who functions equally well in either of his languages in all domains of activity and without any traces of the one language in his use of the other. It is clear, of course, that in keeping to such a strict definition one will find very few bilinguals, and I am well aware that there are many arguments against this point of view. However, going into details about the research on bilingualism would be beyond the scope of this study. The persons included in my experiment can be termed "late bilinguals", as they learnt their foreign language mainly as adults (with the exception of the school teaching they had undergone) if one prefers to use a wider definition of the term "bilingual" than I choose to do. I have chosen to call them "near-native speakers of English". According to Coppieters (1987), near-native speakers are persons who have learned the foreign language in question as adults, and who have reached a level of proficiency where their oral performance cannot be reliably distinguished from that of native speakers, except for a possible accent. The near-native speakers my study deals with, are university students of English at Åbo Akademi, and staff members at English departments of various universities in Finland. Whereas they may not have reached a level of proficiency equal to that of native speakers, English is, nonetheless, a language they use as their main language for their work or their studies. Therefore, while Coppieters' strict prerequisites are not quite equalled here, I think the term "near-nativeness" can be safely applied to the language proficiency of the subjects in question.

1.3 Previous research

Coppieters studied competence differences between "near-native" and native speakers of French. His "near-native" speakers, 21 in all, all lived in France, none of them had learned French (except for some school teaching) before the age of 18, and the average number of years they had spent in France was 17.4, varying from 5.5 to 37. Evidence about their level of proficiency and use was gathered from reports of native speakers who knew the subjects well, and from interviews conducted with the subjects in question. What was then studied, was their intuitions about the grammar of French as compared to that of twenty native French speakers. This study shows a big difference between the near-native and the native speakers. Coppieters mentions the use of *il/elle* and *ce*, the place of the adjective (preposed or postposed), the tense/aspect distinctions, prepositions and articles, all central issues in the French grammar. The large differences perceived between the native speakers and the non-native speakers make me doubt their claimed equal proficiency. Let us look at some of the examples in Coppieters' article: "*Une histoire triste* is a story that makes you cry, and *Une triste histoire* is a bad embarrassing problem. *Un journaliste honteux* is ashamed of what he did, but *un honteux journaliste* is a shameful one. ... NSs' comments on the interpretation of these adjectives are relatively stable and repetitive. NNSs' intuitions, by contrast, are typically incomplete: they have gaps, sometimes surprising ones, in the meaning differences between preposed and postposed adjectives. ... Even on those adjectives which were felt to be truly ambiguous by the NS's, a number of NNS's failed to detect any meaning difference at all." (Coppieters 1984, 558-559) As adjective placement is definitely one of the central issues in French grammar, the ignorance of the meaning differences in the examples mentioned above would, I believe, lead to misunderstandings and unsuccessful communication between native and near-native speakers of French. The same is true for the usage of imparfait and passé composé, whereas the problems of distinguishing between *à* and *de* might not be of a very big importance for communication. Further examples illustrate various aspects of complex French syntax, such as the unacceptable "*Paul assure Virginie heureuse*" vs "*On l'assure heureuse*", which is acceptable. (Coppieters 1984, 562) These structures can easily be avoided in performance, and the difficulties here may thus be of much less importance for the NNSs' performance. All in all, however, the difference between native and near-native divergence from the norm, which ranged between 14.4% for A-over-A to 39.5% for imparfait vs. passé composé, lead me to the conclusion that there would have to be a difference also in performance. A-over-A means that the sentences tested "violate the A-over-A constraint, which 'absolutely prohibit(s) the extraction of a phrase of category A from within a larger phrase also of category A'(Kayne 1975:115)"(Coppieters 1987, 562). Examples of this kind included in Coppieters' study are "*Elle en téléphone à l'auteur*" ('She calls up its author') , which is incorrect, whereas "*Elle en aime l'auteur*" ('She likes its author') is correct, and the incorrect "*Cet homme, dont je joue avec les enfants, est venu ici hier*" ('This man, whose children I play with, came here yesterday') as compared to the correct "*Cet homme, dont j'admire le tableau, est venu ici hier*" ('This man, whose painting I admire, came here yesterday'). Other research has also shown differences between native and non-native speakers on the level of competence, e.g. word association tests. (Söderman, this volume) On the level of performance, we find research on "Spanish-English bilinguals" (ranging from beginners to true bilinguals) conducted by Kirschner (1984) and Kirschner & Stephens (1987). Other important sources for my investigation have been, among others, Linnarud (1986) and Yorio (1989) whose research has been of considerable importance, in one way or another, for this thesis.

2. THE STUDY

2.1 Aim of study

The aim of this study was to see if, and if, then how, the written production of near-native speakers of English differs from that of native English speakers. The questionnaire included aspects such as lexical inadequacy, syntactic constructions, conceptual confusion, rhetorical ineptitude, and mixing of norms. "Other reasons" was also included as a heading. The hypothesis was, that there would be some differences between the texts written by non-native and native English speakers where lexis and syntax are concerned, but that the near-native speakers' high educational level and their habit of writing academic texts would make it possible for them to compensate their more limited vocabulary and lack of syntactic elegance by their conceptual clarity, good rhetorical knowledge and overall linguistic sophistication. The results were also expected to indicate some of the problem areas for advanced learners of English, thus indicating how language teaching at an advanced level might be improved.

2.2 The material

The material includes twenty texts, divided into two subcategories. Ten of the texts are essays and articles published in HUS, the journal of the English department of Abo Akademi, written mainly by university students of English. These texts were given an A as identification. Two texts were written by native English speakers: undergraduate students at American universities, and they are included for comparison. The texts vary in length from one to five pages, and the subjects include travel accounts, book reviews, short stories etc. They have been edited so as not to reveal the linguistic background of the writer through their content (i.e., explicit references to Finland, knowledge of Swedish/Finnish etc. have been left out), spelling mistakes and a few grammatical mistakes have been corrected. The other category consists of letters of reference written by university staff at various universities in Finland, and they were given a B before their individual number. Three of these letters were written by native speakers of English, the rest by non-native English speakers. They are all fairly short, none of them longer than one page. These letters are, naturally, quite homogeneous in content, which was thought to make it easier for the persons reading the texts to concentrate only on the language, than concerning the other texts.

2.3 The method

The twenty texts used were read and commented on by thirteen native speakers of English from Sheffield, post-graduate students of English and/or other languages. I wish to express my gratitude to Sari Monni for taking care of the distribution of the texts to the native subjects in Sheffield, and to Håkan Ringbom for all his practical help in this matter. The native subjects were asked to comment as thoroughly as possible on all texts, and to give as specific examples as possible in six different categories: lexical inadequacy, syntactic constructions, conceptual confusion, rhetorical ineptitude, mixing of norms (e.g British-American), and other reasons. They were also asked to say whether the text "was clearly written by a native speaker", "might possibly have been written by a non-native speaker, but most probably by a native speaker", "might have been written by a native speaker, but most probably by a non-native speaker" or "was clearly written by a non-native speaker". The answers received from the native subjects were then processed so that the average for each text was calculated, as well as averages for each native subject, in order to show how the judgments differed individually, and the different categories commented on have been studied independently. Both the native subjects' intuitions and comments, other previous research, normative grammars, wordlists and other linguistic material have been used in order to make the study as comprehensive as possible.

3. STATISTICS

3.1 General results

The twenty texts were classified by the native subjects as either "clearly written by a native speaker", "probably written by a native speaker", "probably written by a non-native speaker", or "clearly written by a non-native speaker". These options were then given numerical equivalents, so that "clearly written by an NS" was rendered as 1, "probably written by an NS" was rendered as 2, "probably written by an NNS" a 4, and "clearly written by an NNS" was rendered as a 5. The average for each text was then calculated, so that 1.00 would be the average for a text thought by all native subjects to be written by an NS, and 5.00 the average for a text considered by all native subjects to be clearly written by an NNS. None of the twenty texts reached either extreme, but text B2, with an average of 4.54 and no native subject believing it to have been written by an NS, was left out of the investigation, since it could not be considered to meet the criteria for a text written by a speaker of near-native proficiency in English. The rest of the texts were all considered, by at least one native subject, to possibly have been written by an NS, and so meet the criteria stated earlier.

Table 1.

text nr	**average**	**x/x**	**x-x**
A7 nat	1.23	13/0	10-0
B5 nat	1.46	12/1	9-0
B6	1.85	10/3	8-0
B10	2.38	9/4	3-0
A5	2.46	8/5	6-2
B7 nat	2.62	8/5	4-2
A2 (12)	2.75	7/5	1-0
B1	3.08	6/7	1-1

B3 nat	3.15	6/7	2-3
B4	3.15	6/7	2-3
A10	3.15	6/7	3-4
A4	3.31	5/8	2-3
A6	3.31	4/9	1-0
B9	3.77	2/11	2-3
A3 nat (12)	3.83	1/11	1-1
A8 (12)	4.08	2/10	1-6
A1	4.31	1/12	0-6
A9	4.38	1/12	1-8
B8	4.38	1/12	0-7
(B2	4.54	0/13	0-7)

Native A	2.48	non-native A	3.67
Native B	2.67	non-native B	3.10
Total native	2.59	total non-native	3.42

The abbreviation "nat" after a text number means that the text was written by a native speaker, (12) that only 12 native subjects graded it, for one reason or another, the second column gives the total average for each text, the third the number of native subjects placing it as "native" over the number placing it as "non-native", and the last column shows "clearly native" as compared with "clearly non-native". The columns are of interest since they make the differences between the individual native subjects clear, and thus give an indication of the difficulty in deciding whether a text written by speakers of such a high proficiency-level was written by a native speaker or not. Most interesting in this aspect are texts B3, written by a native speaker, with the numbers 2:4:4:3 (from "clearly native" to "clearly non-native"), B4 2:4:4:3, and A10, the text with the most evenly distributed markings: 3:3:3:4. This phenomenon will be further commented on in chapter 3.2.

The two highest-ranked texts were written by native speakers of English, A7 by an undergraduate student at an American university, and B5 by a British professor of English working at a Finnish university. B6 and B10, following them, were written by non-native English speakers, working at Finnish universities, as was A5. B7, B3, and A3, texts also written by native English speakers, one British lecturer working in Finland and one undergraduate student at an American university, were ranked further down, B3 and A3 actually considered to have been written by an NNS by the majority of native subjects. Interestingly enough, text A3, which was the least likely to have been written by an NS of the texts written by native English speakers, only had one native subject claiming it to clearly have been written by a non-native speaker, and as many as 10 native subjects saying it may possibly have been written by a native speaker, but probably by a non-native speaker. Evidently, despite all the awkward phrases, the occasional misuse of words (see chapter 3), and other linguistic problems, there was something in this text which was native-like enough for the native subjects to regard it as possibly written by a native speaker.

The averages also show that there is a difference between texts produced by NS's and texts written by NNS's, especially if we look at the total averages. The essays (text type A) show a larger difference than the reference letters (text type B), which may be due to the nature of written references. The genre is rather closed, and the letters are quite stereotyped. Therefore, an NNS who knows the formula is quite likely to produce a letter which could be believed to have been written by an NS. The letters ranked low on the list generally do so for specific reasons, such as grammatical problems and/or cultural differences (see chapters 5 and 7).

As for the A-type, there are different things revealing the writer to be non-native. Lexical problems (chap. 4), grammatical problems (chap. 5) and cultural differences (chap. 7) play a certain role here as well, but the problems of this category are more often due to a certain rhetorical ineptitude and an inability to make the text "work". Idioms are incorrectly used or not used at all, and linguistic nuances seem to be ignored. (See further development in chapters 4, 5, and 6.)

3.2 Native subjects and their individual gradings of the texts

The twenty texts were sent to Sheffield to be read and commented on by native speakers of English. The native subjects were told that some of the texts were written by native English speakers, and some by non-native speakers. The native subjects in Sheffield were asked to fill in one questionnaire for each text (see appendix). They were also asked to comment on the texts and to be as specific as possible. Originally, we had hoped to get twenty native subjects to complete the questionnaires, but unfortunately only received answers from thirteen native speakers. General tendencies can be seen, but in many cases only one or two of the native subjects agree on which the features revealing a text to be written by a non-native speaker are. Some of the native subjects obviously did not take their task very seriously, and one of them evidently used the writer's presumed intelligence as a criterion for native/non-nativeness. This did not lead to "correct" conclusions about the native language of the writers.

I have chosen to include the statistics for each of the native subjects, with a column showing the deviance from the total average for each text. My reason for doing this is mainly that the native subjects differ to a surprisingly high degree in their grading of the twenty texts. This can also be taken as proof that the writers are of a proficiency quite close to that of ordinary native speakers. I also mention the native subjects' reasons for marking the texts as they have, although many features are common to all subjects. More specific data about the individual problems will be found in chapters 4 through 7, where lexical features, syntactic problems, rhetorical "ineptitude", conceptual confusion, and other problems, mainly cultural differences, will be treated. Although the native subjects differ in their opinions about the texts, most of them have a total average which is lower for the NS's' texts than that for those produced by NNS's.

3.2.1 Native subject I

Table 2.

text nr	score	average	+/-
B5 nat	1	1.46	+0.46
B7 nat	1	2.62	+1.62
B3 nat	1	3.15	+2.15
A7 nat	2	1.23	-0.77
B10	2	2.38	+0.38
B1	2	3.08	+1.08
A10	2	3.15	+1.15
A6	2	3.31	+1.31
B6	4	1.85	-2.15
A5	4	2.46	-1.54
A2	4	2.75	-1.25
A4	4	3.31	-0.69
B9	4	3.77	-0.23
A3 nat	4	3.83	-0.17
A8	4	4.08	+0.08
A1	4	4.31	+0.31
A9	4	4.38	+0.38
B4	5	3.15	-1.85
B8	5	4.38	-0.62
Native	1.80	Non-native	3.57

In the case of native subject 1, the grading is particularly "correct". 75% of the texts have been referred to the correct category, and that is the highest percentage reached by any native subject. (Native subject IV also reached 75%). Only one of the texts written by an NS is here claimed to probably have been written by an NNS: text A3, which was the native text ranking furthest down on the list.

The reasons given by native subject I for marking a text as written by an NNS rather than by an NS are lexical problems: unnecessary words, repetition and the tendency to ignore the differences between formal and informal lexical choices (style-shifting), as well as punctuation, word order, tense, and incorrect article usage.

3.2.2 Native subject II

Table 3.

text nr	**score**	**average**	**+/-**
A7 nat	1	1.23	+0.23
B5 nat	1	1.46	+0.46
B6	1	1.85	+0.85
B10	1	2.38	+1.38
A5	1	2.46	+1.46
B7 nat	1	2.62	+1.62
A10	1	3.15	+2.15
A2	2	2.75	+0.75
B1	2	3.08	+1.08
B4	2	3.15	+1.15
A6	2	3.31	+1.31
B3 nat	4	3.15	-0.85
B9	4	3.77	-0.23
A3 nat	4	3.83	-0.17
A8	4	4.08	+0.08
A9	4	4.38	+0.38
B8	4	4.38	+0.38
A4	5	3.31	-1.69
A1	5	4.31	-0.69
Native	2.20	Non-native	2.71

The averages for the two groups do not differ much here, and they are in general quite low. More than half of the texts included in the survey are regarded as clearly or probably written by NS's. Native subject II only reached a percentage of 50% correctly marked texts.

The features of the texts commented on are repetition, oldfashioned vocabulary, lack of shortcuts, difficulties with the distinction between singular and plural forms, word order, paragraph structure, articles, sentence length, punctuation, prepositions, and also a certain linguistic excess and clichéd diction.

3.2.3 Native subject III

Table 4.

text nr	score	average	+/-
A7 nat	1	1.23	+0.23
B5 nat	1	1.46	+0.46
B10	1	2.38	+1.38
A6	1	3.31	+2.31
B6	2	1.85	-0.15
A1	2	4.31	+2.31
A5	4	2.46	-1.54
B7 nat	4	2.62	-1.38
A2	4	2.75	-1.25
B4	4	3.15	-0.85
A3 nat	4	3.83	-0.17
B8	4	4.38	+0.38
B1	5	3.08	-1.92
B3 nat	5	3.15	-1.85
A10	5	3.15	-1.85
A4	5	3.31	-1.69
B9	5	3.77	-1.23
A9	5	4.38	-0.62
A8	unclear	4.08	-
Native	3.00	Non-native	3.54

For native subject number III, the averages are even closer. Here, however, the percentage of correctly categorized texts is 65%, but of the wrongly categorized texts, 3 were written by native speakers, so that more than half of the texts written by native speakers were wrongly referred to the non-native category. Only four texts, two of them actually written by NS's, are regarded as clearly written by NS's, and two more as probably written by NS's. This subject is strongly critical of all texts.

Non-native features are, here again, lexical problems: repetition, odd combinations of words, and problems distinguishing between formal and informal vocabulary, and also word order, tense, prepositions and sentence simplicity and sentence length have been commented on as factors revealing the linguistic status of the writers.

3.2.4 Native subject IV

Table 5.

text nr	score	average	+/-
A7 nat	1	1.23	+0.23
B6	1	1.85	+0.85
B7 nat	1	2.62	+1.62
A10	1	3.15	+2.15
B5 nat	2	1.46	-0.54
A5	2	2.46	+0.46
B3 nat	2	3.15	+1.15
A6	2	3.31	+1.31
B10	4	2.38	-1.62
A2	4	2.75	-1.25
B4	4	3.15	-0.85
A4	4	3.31	-0.69
B9	4	3.77	-0.23
A3 nat	4	3.83	-0.17
A8	4	4.08	+0.08
B1	5	3.08	-1.92
A1	5	4.31	-0.69
A9	5	4.38	-0.62
B8	5	4.38	-0.62
Native	2.00	Non-native	3.50

Native subject IV makes a clear distinction between NS's and NNS's. Along with native subject I, this native subject reaches the highest percentage of correctly categorized texts, 75%. Features commented on to be non-native include the register (familiar problems distinguishing between formal and informal language), archaic expressions, word order, articles vs. pronouns, punctuation, prepositions and sentence combinations.

3.2.5 Native subject V

Table 6.

text nr	score	average	+/-
A7 nat	1	1.23	+0.23
B5 nat	1	1.46	+0.46
B6	1	1.85	+0.85
A5	1	2.46	+1.46
A10	1	3.15	+2.15
B1	2	3.08	+1.08
B4	2	3.15	+1.15
A4	2	3.31	+1.31
B10	4	2.38	-1.62
A2	4	2.75	-1.25
B3 nat	4	3.15	-0.85
A6	4	3.31	-0.69
B9	4	3.77	-0.23
A1	4	4.31	+0.31
A9	4	4.38	+0.38
B7 nat	5	2.62	-2.38
A3 nat	5	3.83	-1.17
A8	5	4.08	-0.92
B8	5	4.38	-0.62
Native	3.20	Non-native	3.07

Native subject V is the only native subject who has a lower average for the native speakers than for the non-native ones. The percentage of incorrectly categorized texts is 45%, and 3 of the texts actually written by native speakers, i.e. one third of the wrongly categorized texts, were wrongly believed to have been written by non-native speakers of English. This is interesting, and the reason can be seen when we look at the comments on the texts. Repetition, redundancy, lack of fluidity, awkward expressions, peculiar phrasing, clumsiness, and formality and correctness as well as the use of technical language are claimed to be non-native features. Some of these features have been commented on by other native subjects as well, but at least formality, correctness, and use of technical language are seen as features of a native speaker's proficiency by most other native subjects. Also, this native subject's definition of "peculiar phrasing" and "awkward expressions" mainly seems to be phrases and expressions he/she wouldn't use him/herself, not necessarily a commonly accepted definition. In this case it leads to an evidently incorrect conclusion about the native language of many of the writers.

3.2.6 Native subject VI

Table 7.

text nr	score	average	+/-
A7 nat	1	1.23	+0.23
B5 nat	2	1.46	-0.54
B10	2	2.38	+0.38
A5	2	2.46	+0.46
B7 nat	2	2.62	+0.62
A2	2	2.75	+0.75
B1	2	3.08	+1.08
A10	2	3.15	+1.15
B6	4	1.85	-2.15
B3 nat	4	3.15	-0.85
A4	4	3.31	-0.69
A6	4	3.31	-0.69
A3 nat	4	3.83	-0.17
A1	4	4.31	+0.31
B4	5	3.15	-1.85
B9	5	3.77	-1.23
A8	5	4.08	-0.92
A9	5	4.38	-0.62
B8	5	4.38	-0.62
Native	2.60	Non-native	3.64

Native subject VI is correct in 65% of the texts. This subject makes some very interesting comments about non-native linguistic features in the texts. Like most other native subjects, number VI mentions word order, punctuation, prepositions, lexical oddities, incorrect usage of tense, repetitions, singular/plural distinction, but also rhetorical features, such as failure to use likely contractions ("I will wait..." instead of "I'll wait") and "flattery, which is uncharacteristic for a British academic (and, I would have thought, for a Finnish academic too!)." This subject also mentions that NNS's tend to get the emphasis wrong.

3.2.7 Native subject VII

Table 8.

text nr	score	average	+/-
A5	1	2.46	+1.46
B4	1	3.15	+2.15
B9	1	3.77	+2.77
A7 nat	2	1.23	-0.77
B10	2	2.38	+0.38
B7 nat	2	2.62	+0.62
B5 nat	4	1.46	-2.54
B6	4	1.85	-2.15
B1	4	3.08	-0.92
B3 nat	4	3.15	-0.85
A10	4	3.15	-0.85
A4	4	3.31	-0.69
A6	4	3.31	-0.69
A3 nat	4	3.83	-0.17
B8	4	4.38	+0.38
A8	5	4.08	-0.92
A1	5	4.31	-0.69
A9	5	4.38	-0.62
A2	unclear	2.75	-

Native 3.20 Non-native 3.38

In this case, the averages for NS's vs. NNS's are very close, and actually no native speaker's text is defined as "clearly written by a native speaker." 36.84% of the texts are incorrectly classified, of them two texts written by native speakers. Native subject VII comments on some problems of word order and mistakes in the use of tense, but most of his comments are on the content of the texts, which evidently does not impress him. Comments are made on the writers' "lack of intelligence" instead of the linguistic features of the texts, which obviously does not lead to "correct" conclusions.

3.2.8 Native subject VIII

Table 9.

text nr	score	average	+/-
A7 nat	1	1.23	+0.23
B5 nat	1	1.46	+0.46
B6	1	1.85	+0.85
A5	1	2.46	+1.46
B9	1	3.77	+2.77
A9	1	4.38	+3.38
B10	2	2.38	+0.38
A2	2	2.75	+0.75
B1	2	3.08	+1.08
B3 nat	2	3.15	+1.15
B8	2	4.38	+2.38
B7 nat	4	2.62	-1.74
B4	4	3.15	-0.85
A10	4	3.15	-0.85
A4	4	3.31	-0.69
A6	4	3.31	-0.69
A3 nat	4	3.83	-0.17
A1	4	4.31	+0.31
A8	5	4.08	-0.92
Native	2.40	Non-native	2.64

Native subject VIII categorized 50% of the texts wrongly. Unfortunately, native subject VIII does not mention any non-native-like characteristics, but comments on the fluidity of the texts thought to be written by native English speakers: evidently, therefore, lack of fluidity would be a characteristic of a text written by a non-native speaker of English.

3.2.9 Native subject IX

Table 10.

text nr	score	average	+/-
A7 nat	1	1.23	+0.23
B6	1	1.85	+0.85
A4	1	3.31	+2.31
B5 nat	2	1.46	-0.54
A2	2	2.75	+0.75
B4	2	3.15	+1.15
A10	2	3.15	+1.15
B10	4	2.38	-1.62
A5	4	2.46	-1.54
B7 nat	4	2.62	-1.74
B1	4	3.08	-0.92
A6	4	3.31	-0.69
B9	4	3.77	-0.23
A9	4	4.38	+0.38
B8	4	4.38	+0.38
B3 nat	5	3.15	-1.85
A8	5	4.08	-0.92
A1	5	4.31	-0.69
A3 nat	unclear	3.83	-
Native	3.00	Non-native	3.29

The averages are very close, although the native speakers' average is slightly lower than the non-native speakers' average. 67.88% of the texts are correctly categorized, but since only four of the texts written by native speakers were graded, the percentage of incorrect marking of native speakers' texts is as high as 50%: Features commented on are punctuation, vocabulary (which is not varied enough), cultural aspects, word order and phrasing.

3.2.10 Native subject X

Table 11.

text nr	score	average	+/-
A7 nat	1	1.23	+0.23
B5 nat	1	1.46	+0.46
B4	1	3.15	+2.15
B6	2	1.85	-0.15
B10	2	2.38	+0.38
B7 nat	2	2.62	+0.62
A2	2	2.75	+0.75
B3 nat	2	3.15	+1.15
A4	2	3.31	+1.31
B1	4	3.08	-0.92
A10	4	3.15	-0.85
A6	4	3.31	-0.69
B9	4	3.77	-0.23
A3 nat	4	3.83	-0.17
A1	4	4.31	+0.31
A5	5	2.46	-2.54
A8	5	4.08	-0.92
A9	5	4.38	-0.62
B8	5	4.38	-0.62
Native	2.00	Non-native	3.50

Native subject X obviously sees a clear distinction between native and non-native writers. 70% of the texts are correctly categorized, and only one text by native speaker was believed to have been written by a non-native speaker.The averages differ greatly, and features commented on include rhetorical ineptitude, vocabulary, mis-match of noun/verb (see further development in chapter 4.4.1, collocations), genitives, lacks of shortcuts, article usage, redundancy, tense, prepositions, and the native subject is in general well aware of both linguistic and extra-linguistic features in all texts.

1.2.11 Native subject XI

Table 12.

text nr	**score**	**average**	**+/-**
A7 nat	1	1.23	+0.23
B5 nat	1	1.46	+0.46
B6	1	1.85	+0.85
A4	1	3.31	+2.31
B7 nat	2	2.62	+0.62
A2	2	2.75	+0.75
B3 nat	2	3.15	+1.15
B4	2	3.15	+1.15
A8	2	4.08	+2.08
B10	4	2.38	-1.62
B1	4	3.08	-0.92
A6	4	3.31	-0.69
B9	4	3.77	-0.23
A3 nat	4	3.83	-0.17
A5	5	2.46	-2.54
A10	5	3.15	-1.85
A1	5	4.31	-0.69
A9	5	4.38	-0.62
B8	5	4.38	-0.62
Native	2.00	Non-native	3.79

This native subjects distinguishes clearly between native and non-native English speakers, as well. The marking is also here correct to 70%. Vocabulary, style-shifting, cultural aspects, prepositions, collocations again, lack of shortcuts, overgeneralization, redundancy, and word order are considered non-native.

3.2.12 Native subject XII

Table 13.

text nr	score	average	+/-
B5 nat	1	1.46	+0.46
B6	1	1.85	+0.85
A5	1	2.46	+1.46
B7 nat	1	2.62	+1.62
A2	1	2.75	+1.75
A7 nat	2	1.23	-0.77
B10	2	2.38	+0.38
A4	2	3.31	+1.31
B1	4	3.08	-0.92
B4	4	3.15	-0.85
A6	4	3.31	-0.69
A3 nat	4	3.83	-0.17
A8	4	4.08	+0.08
A1	4	4.31	+0.31
B3 nat	5	3.15	-1.85
A10	5	3.15	-1.85
B9	5	3.77	-1.23
A9	5	4.38	-0.62
B8	5	4.38	-0.62
Native	2.60	Non-native	3.36

The averages differ here as well, but not to a very high degree. 65% of the texts are referred to the correct category, but in the case of native subject XII, two of five texts written by native speakers are classified as written by non-native English speakers. Plural/singular shifting, article usage, word order, lack of subordination, punctuation, redundancy and a "general lack of sophistication" are regarded as typical non-native features.

1.2.13 Native subject XIII

Table 14.

text nr	score	average	+/-
A7 nat	1	1.23	+0.23
B5 nat	1	1.46	+0.46
B6	1	1.85	+0.85
B10	1	2.38	+1.38
A5	1	2.46	+1.46
B1	1	3.08	+2.08
B3 nat	1	3.15	+2.15
A3 nat	1	3.83	+2.38
A8	1	4.08	+3.08
A2	4	2.75	-1.25
A6	4	3.31	-0.69
B9	4	3.77	-0.23
A9	4	4.38	+0.38
B8	4	4.38	+0.38
B7 nat	5	2.62	-2.38
B4	5	3.15	-1.85
A10	5	3.15	-1.85
A4	5	3.31	-1.69
A1	5	4.31	-0.69
Native	1.80	Non-native	3.21

Native subject XIII seems to be very generous in his marking of the texts. However, the average for the texts written by native speakers is much lower than that for the texts written by non-native speakers. This subject reaches a percentage of correctly marked texts of 70%, which must be regarded as rather high; only two native subjects have actually succeeded better. Unfortunately, the comments are very few and mainly focus on the features of a native speaker's writing, which is seen as fluent, confident and clear. A lack of these features would logically describe a non-native speaker's writing, but that is a very vague definition.

Most of the native subjects agreed on the features revealing the linguistic status of non-native English speakers. However, the particular instances commented on were not always identical. Sometimes it is also very complicated to define which category a certain deviance from the norm should be referred to: e.g the expression "those important fractions of seconds" (where the idiomatic expression would imply degrees of time lost from one second), can be regarded as a grammatical mistake, a personal stylistic feature, or as an incorrectly memorized idiomatic expression. Another example is the phrase "used to caring about myself only", where the prepositional choice led to the comment that "such implied ego-centricism would not be found in an English text." Should this then be classified as a syntactic problem or as a cultural difference between British and Finnish ways of thinking? Both cases will be commented on both as possible syntactic problems, but if we see the writers as people of near-native proficiency (the texts' averages were 2.46 and 3.15 respectively) I draw the conclusion that the first case is a result of a personal style and the second one an example of the cultural differences between the two linguistic groups.

4. LEXICAL FEATURES

In several cases the vocabulary used is a clear indicator of the linguistic status of the writer. Mainly it is a matter of repetition and style-shifting: often the writers use a rather simple vocabulary and abstain from using synonyms. This does not necessarily imply that they don't know useful synonyms, but they seem to lack the capability to realize the effect of such redundancy on their readers, and they don't always know which word would be the most suitable in the given context (cf. Kirschner 1984, Coppieters 1987).

We also find, within this category, the problem of idiomaticity: conventionalized language, i.e standard expressions and collocations. Whereas the most common conventionalized expressions, e.g "according to", "a human being" etc. are correctly used by almost all non-native speakers included in this survey, we find some examples of attempted idioms clearly recognized as non-nativelike.

I have chosen to use some of the same models as Moira Linnarud in her doctoral dissertation (1986) to determine the lexical sophistication and the lexical density of the texts. Concerning the lexical sophistication, however, I have decided to include all words, because I have used the *Frequency Analysis of English Usage* by Francis and Kučera, and all lemmas are included there. This means, however, that different forms of the words are not included as separate words. I have counted the percentage of words with an adjusted frequency of below 37.73%, i.e not within the 2000 most frequent English words, and divided this with the total number of words, and using the formula

$$\frac{\textbf{Words not within the first 2000 words}}{\textbf{Total number of words}} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

I have reached a percentage of lexical sophistication for each text. One other interesting lexical factor would have been the lexical individuality, but for that the texts would have needed to be truly comparable concerning the topic, which these texts are not. I admit that even the other lexical factors may not lead to quite fair results, as the texts differ greatly in their nature, but I do believe that the results are of interest for this study, as they show at least a tendency, which well could be further investigated in another context.

4.1 Lexical variation

To get a clear picture of the level of redundancy in the texts, I have counted the number of different words in the texts. If all words were counted the results would not be clear, as a longer text will have a higher level of lexical redundancy that a shorter text, so I have chosen to count the first 400 words in the A-type texts. This number was not chosen randomly, but was picked because the shortest text contains 401 words (A3). The table shows that a lower level of redundancy is not necessarily an indicator of a native writer, since A9, with the highest percentage of different words was the text which was thought by the highest number of native subjects to have been written by a non-native speaker. However, it is clear that redundancy must play a part, either as a factor in itself (and many native subjects mentioned it) or else that it correlates with the other results.

Table 15.

Text number	percentage of different words
A7(nat)	51.50
A5	56.75
Á2	54.25
A10	56.75
A4	50.00
A6	45.75
A3(nat)	46.75
A8	50.50
A1	44.50
A9	57.75

Although the correlation between table 15 and table 1 (p 11-12) is not very convincing, it seems that lexical variation is of a certain importance. There may be a higher degree of correlation if all words derived from the same stem were counted as one word, e.g. all "interest-based" words as one, but in order to follow the same pattern for all the lexical factors measured, I have chosen to count all different forms as different words.

As for the texts of type B, no correlation at all can be seen. It would therefore seem, that although most native subjects mentioned redundancy as an indicator of non-nativeness, it is not, objectively speaking. There is a lot more redundancy in text B6, believed by 10 native subjects to have been written by a native speaker, than in text B8, believed to possibly have been written by a native speaker by only one of the native subjects who have graded the texts.

Table 16.

text number	percentage of different words
B5(nat)	58.86
B6	52.90
B10	62.35
B7(nat)	67.65
B1	64.50
B3(nat)	58.82
B4	56.45
B9	50.25
B8	63.00

The percentages here were calculated differently from those of the A-texts in that all words in each letter was counted, since none of the letters reached even 300 words. Here as well all different forms of a word were counted as different words, and the percentages of different words are higher than for the A-texts, which I believe is due to the texts being shorter. The same is also true of the words/sentence-factor, discussed in chapter 5.

4.2 Lexical density

Lexical density is the percentage of lexical words in the total number of words in a text. According to Linnarud (1986) a written text normally has a lexical density of over 40 % if written by a native speaker. All texts within the sample have a lexical density of over 40 %, but the most interesting feature here is the fact that only texts written by native speakers reached an LD of over 50 % in the A-category. The text (A7) with the highest LD is ranked as number 1, and at the end of the column we find the texts with the lowest LD-percentages, with the exception of text A2, high on the list but with a low LD. Text A2 is a ghost story, and imitates successfully the style of e.g. Henry James, and this may be the reason why the lexical density doesn't really matter concerning that particular text. Many of the words and nuances are put there to create a certain mood, a feeling of things long past.

The formula for LD is: $\frac{\text{Lexical words}}{\text{Total number of words}} \times \frac{100}{1}$

Table 17

text nr	**lexical density**
A7(nat)	55.09
A5	46.52
A2	40.60
A10	43.13
A4	43.02
A6	45.41
A3(nat)	53.27
A8	46.15
A1	42.68
A9	41.86

I find it very interesting that the two texts written by native speakers so clearly have a higher percentage of lexical density than the other texts, especially as 5 texts written by non-native speakers scored higher than text A3. This may, however, be the reason for the fact that only one native speaker said that A3 was "clearly written by a non-native speaker", since lexical density, along with lexical sophistication (chapter 4.3) are the only two factors measured where A3 really reached a high score. This may account for the ambivalency on the part of the native subjects: it is not a "good" text, but there is something in its style that is recognizable as native-like.

If we find that the texts written by native speakers had the highest lexical density of the texts of the A-category, we also see that lexical density correlates closely with the grading of the B-texts.

Table 18.

text nr	lexical density
B5(nat)	55.70
B6	53.24
B10	54.32
B7(nat)	55.15
B1	46.75
B3(nat)	45.88
B4	47.98
B9	47.21
B8	46.00

As can be seen, those texts with a lexical density of more than 50% were considered as the ones most likely to have been written by native speakers of English. This further strengthens the argument that lexical density is an important factor in measuring proficiency in writing, and it is possible that it could be used to determine a writer's linguistic status. B5, B6, B10 and B7 were thought to be written by native speakers by a majority of the native subjects, although these did not count words or calculate lexical density. It would seem, therefore, that lexical density either correlates with other factors, or in itself produces recognizable features of a text. However, more extensive research could clarify this.

4.3 Lexical sophistication

As for lexical sophistication, we find that text A7, written by a native speaker of English and with an average of 1.23, has the highest level of lexical sophistication, i.e. the highest percentage of words outside the most common 2000 English words. The lowest percentage was reached in text A6, with A1 following closely. Here again, as for lexical density, A3, also written by a native speaker but with an average of only 3.83, has reached a surprisingly high level.

Table 19.

text number	**percentage of LS**
A7(nat)	20.28
A5	11.22
A2	11.55
A10	14.91
A4	11.00
A6	10.50
A3(nat)	16.38
A8	19.05
A1	10.62
A9	12.05

The vocabulary matrix I have used is the *Frequency Analysis of the English Language* by Francis and Kučera, and since it is American, it should have favored the non-native speakers, in that several of the words in the data base Francis and Kučera have used are names of American places and towns, and texts A7 and A3 were both written by American students. This may also be the reason why text A8 has reached such a high percentage, since it is a text that deals with Scotland, and many of the words in the text are names of towns in Scotland, and these are of course not included in the data base. Text A7 is also a highly specialized text, but as it deals with American history, many names of cities and states are included, and they can also usually be found in Francis and Kučera's vocabulary matrix, so I believe these two factors cancel each other out. Therefore, I think it can be safely claimed that the native speakers involved in this experiment have a higher level of lexical sophistication than the non-natives. In order to get a completely clear picture of this, however, a larger and more homogeneous corpus would be needed, but at least the tendencies can be clearly seen.

As for the B-texts, they all deal with the same subject, more or less, they are all written about Finnish students at Finnish universities, and they should therefore make for even better comparison.

Table 20.

text number	percentage of LS
B5(nat)	17.10
B6	18.41
B10	15.43
B7(nat)	11.84
B1	11.24
B3(nat)	11.76
B4	13.71
B9	13.71
B8	15.00

The two texts with the highest level of lexical sophistication also ranked first on the list. The fact that B4, B9, and B8, which all have quite a high level of lexical sophistication were not ranked higher may be due to the nature of their "sophistication". They were said to be wordy, to mention quite unnecessary facts, and to contain too many Finnish/Swedish course designations, and these would of course not be found in the corpus I have used, and therefore fall into the category of more sophisticated words, which they, in fact, are not. However, the tendency is clear here as well, and I am convinced that lexical sophistication, as well as lexical density, are important factors in measuring the level of proficiency of a speaker. This is very interesting, since all the non-native speakers involved have a high level of education and have read a great deal of both fiction and non-fiction in English. There is, however, a big difference between one's active and one's passive vocabulary, and this may be where it shows most clearly.

4.4 Specific lexical problems

The factors discussed in chapters 4.1 through 4.3 are of interest for this study as they show some statistical features. However, they were not, of course, commented on in any detail by the native subjects who read and commented on the texts. Their comments often involve specific words. I have chosen to include the lexical features, i.e. also the individual words commented on, as I believe this is of a certain practical interest as well. Many of the native subjects' comments are both intelligent and witty, and they show quite clearly - and in some cases rather ruthlessly - just how important those small linguistic nuances are.

4.4.1 Collocations

This category is the largest specific lexical category. Collocation is, according to Yorio, defined as "the habitual co-ocurrence of individual lexical items" (Yorio 1989, 67) and would therefore be a feature of the "native-like selection" mentioned in chapter 1.1. Some of these are quite naturally used in non-native texts, but often they are avoided, and in some cases within the sample we find examples where collocational phrases have been broken up and one part has been substituted by another. These have been commented on as "not incorrect, but odd" or "un-English". They occur in quite a few of the texts written by non-native speakers, but not in any texts written by native speakers, although quite a few features in them as well have been commented on by the native subjects. It would seem, therefore, that incorrect collocations are clear indicators of a non-native speaker.

"*They follow their team through rain and snow*"(A8) was commented on by several native subjects. This is not a standard expression in English if it is to be regarded as a figure of speech, and as one native subject pointed out: if it really snowed, games would not be played.

"Possibilities" seems to be a rather difficult word to near-native speakers. Often "opportunities" would be preferred, as in "*They had many possibilities*" (text A6), which preferably would be rendered as "they had many opportunities" or "options". Otherwise, the word "possibilities" could be kept and the verb changed: "There **were** many possibilities". This is a case where the non-native speaker's knowledge - or lack of knowledge - of collocations can be clearly seen. One native subject interpreted this as indicative of a certain, non-English, cultural outlook: "possibilities" seen as tangible, actual realities. In England, according to this particular native subject, they would be seen as not belonging to anyone, you **choose one**. (See also chapter 4.4.3, adjectives) Mainly, however, the problem is due to the fact that both "possibilities" and "opportunities" would be rendered as "möjligheter" in Swedish, the writer's native language. This is then a case of interference (e.g. Felix 1980). This example is illustrative of the problem, in many cases "possibilities" and "opportunities" are synonymous and interchangeable, but in this context, due to the chosen verb, "possibilities" is unsuitable. Another problematic issue, according to the native subjects related to cultural differences in the language usage, is to be found in the phrase "*as he got more and more in the grasp of his memories*" (text A9). The expression is considered un-English, as memories are not perceived as having grasps - and if they did you could not get more and more in them. "Grip" would be a better choice. This is not merely a stylistic feature, since all native subjects reacted to the lexical choice, which is not the case with other possibly stylistic features. It is a nuance which is difficult for any non-native speaker, as both "grip" and "grasp" would be translated as "tag", "grepp", "klor", "vald" etc. However, "grasp" is not used impersonally, whereas "grip" may be. This difference belongs to the category of nuances that have to be perceived **intuitively**, in accordance with Andrews' (1980) interpretation of Pierce's interpretants (the emotional interpretant), as is often the case with collocations.

Another case of redundancy due to a misuse of vocabulary would be "general hang" - a "hang" is per definition always general, the correct idiomatic expression is "general drift" or simply "hang".

"*Time had put its marks*" (A2) would normally be expressed differently: instead of "put" a native speaker would use "left", another case of collocation problems for non-native speakers. The same is true for "*showed me in*" (A2), which might be changed to "escorted me in" for better reading.

One writer used "find" in connection with "interpretation" (A6), and this could either be an example of mismatch of verb and noun (you find meaning, apply interpretation), that is, again, problem of collocation, **or**, and this is perhaps the case here, it could suggest an analytic passivity (as needing a poem to externalize one's own, hitherto unknown, feelings) which is uncharacteristic of anglo-american literary criticism. This interpretation is possible, because several native subjects commented on this essay as un-English in this respect: and it is true that literature is studied to a larger extent in British and American schools than here, which may lead to a certain uncertainty of tone in literary criticism written by Finnish students.

In the phrase "*this year the team has joined the prestigious Premier League and it is now struggling to stay up*"(A8) we find again a collocational problem: either "it has been promoted" or, if "join" is to be used, the prepositional phrase "stay up" would have to be changed to "stay there".

We find exactly the opposite in text A7, written by a native American, who uses "immense" in the sense of "*immense psychological importance*", where it is said to "show good collocation when 'immense' has a variety of synonyms."

4.4.2 Nouns

This category contains a few problematic items, although it is not of any considerable importance considering the size of the material.

As for several of the examples mentioned in chapter 4.4.1, there are some cases in which a Swedish word has several English equivalents, and where a lack of knowledge about linguistic nuances has caused problems for the writer. In text A6, we find "gräns". It has been rendered as "border" in the expression "*Here I see the fence as a kind of 'border'*". The native subjects would have preferred another term, "barrier" or "boundary". Such phenomena are very difficult to manage in a foreign language, partly because the learner is forced to limit his vocabulary for practical reasons, and partly because of the lack of the emotional language code (Andrews 1980).

"The Netherlands" (A5), though correct, would in some cases be enough for a native subject to reveal the non-English linguistic background of the writer, since the English nearly always use "Holland". Such features are almost impossible for a non-native speaker to know.

Another problem can be detected in the phrase "*I have always had the impression that XX would make an excellent language teacher*", used in one letter of reference, text B10. One native subject commented on it saying that "impression" is not often used for something as concrete/measurable as an evaluation of a person's potential for a specific job: rather "I have always thought/felt that". This is not, however, a problem of interference, since the same problem appears in the writer's native language (Swedish). The example goes to show, however, how important the ability to write well is, and how it affects the readers in their judgment of a text. This particular example was found in a text written by a non-native speaker of English, but similar examples can be found in text A3 (see chapter 4.3, 4.6 and 5.3, adjectives and prepositions).

An example of quite a different category is the term "au pairers", used by the writer of text A10, an odd nominalizing of a word already functioning as a noun to the native subjects. However, the explanation for this term probably lies in the writer's knowledge of French: "au pair" is the function, not the person functioning in French, where one can say "je travaille au pair", but, if one wants to express what one is, one would have to say "je suis jeune fille au pair". This could be regarded as an example of retroactive transfer (L3 - L2) (van Els 1977), but more primarily I believe this to be an expression of the writer's personality: so as not to break the French norm, one chooses another way of expressing it: similar cases can be found in ordinary conversations with people who have worked in that function themselves.

One problem found especially in the letters of reference were the Finnish/Swedish course ignitions, a difficult thing to avoid, as the writers all work at Finnish/Swedish universities. One of the letters included a reference to "mercantile subjects" (B8), which is not an accepted term. "Economics", although it is not an exact translation of the Swedish expression "merkantila ämnen" would probably be better, or else "business", suggested by one native subject.

Another interesting phenomenon that I would like to comment on in this context is the dated vocabulary some of the writers used. Some of the words are no longer used, but as they were still common in the 1950's, it is naturally difficult for a person not living in England to keep track of the words disappearing from the language. Such words are often used for quite some time in the teaching of foreign languages, since progress is too quick for a teacher to follow. Also English-speaking persons living in a foreign country tend to continue using these anachronisms, a feature which comes forth in my examination. Examples of such dated vocabulary in my material are "eiderdown" (quilt), "rouge" (blusher), and "darling" (honey or similar). This is interesting, as it is the text itself that determines whether or not the words in question are considered anachronisms or not. As for "eiderdown", the word appears in a ghost-story (A2) which also in other respects is set in a rather oldfashioned atmosphere, and only a few of the native subjects have commented on it. "Darling" and "rouge", however, were found in a quite modern text (A1), where the writer also mentioned "pizza", and were therefore regarded as clear anachronisms by a majority of the native subjects.

In a very few cases a noun is definitely misused in the sample. We find "surroundings" instead of "suburbs" (A9), and "parlour" in the sense of a book of phrases, used in text A5, was not accepted by any native subject. "Time pressure" is an incorrect nominalization of the genitive "the pressure of time." (A5) "Signal" instead of "ring" or "call" is not intelligible (A1). A case of a definitely misused word is "sincerity" in the phrase "*Violence in connection with football is something which the Scottish treat with utmost sincerity*" (A8). The correct word would be "seriousness", and this mistake cannot be seen as due to interference from the writer's native language (Swedish), neither as a case of "false friends", but rather, I believe, to a case of words seemingly alike in the foreign language, and as such, a symptom of interlanguage.

"By accident" is not quite suitable in "*When I completely by accident saw the sign*" (A4): it would imply that the narrator was not responsible, a somewhat odd implication in this context, where "by chance" would be preferred.

"Window" used in the title "*Scottish Window*" (A8) is an odd metaphor to a native English speaker, but "like many of the non-native images it is lovely". "Stains of damp" (A9) is not a good expression, it should be "damp marks" if they are marks left by the dampness which have now dried, or "damp patches" if they are still damp.

4.4.3. Verbs

"*The difficulties in conforming to the male world*" (A6) was by one native subject considered inappropriate and would be better rendered as "coming to terms with". The expression "*'What's that?' I thought*" (A2) was also commented on by several native subjects, as "thought" does not correspond with the surprise in the interrogative.

"Profit", along with "possibilities", seems to be one of the most problematic words in this sample. In the phrase "*she is exactly the type of person who would profit greatly from such a stay*" (B8) and "*he is exactly the kind of student who profits most from spending some time abroad*" (B1) "profit" cannot be said to be completely wrong, but "benefit" would be preferred.

"*I am sure he will encounter no problems*" (B1) in the sense of "experience" is not very good: he may very well encounter problems, the referee can't really know anything about that, and for his ability to deal with them one would use "experience". However, as the same kind of problem may be seen in the expression: "*...should help him to make the most of unfamiliar and perhaps strange situations*" (B3), written by a native speaker of English, I would say that it cannot be termed a sign of non-nativeness in the objective sense of the word.

"*It didn't take many hours*" (A9) is probably due to interference from the Swedish "det tog inte många timmar", and the correct idiomatic expression would be "It wasn't many hours". However, this was only commented on by one native subject.

"*Setting down a suitcase*" (A9) is, as some native subjects pointed out, archaic, and "put down" would be preferred. The phrase "*crushing back to reality*" was commented on by most of the native subjects, but it can be seen as a misuse of word (where the preferred alternative would be "crashing") or as an individual stylistic feature, and is not necessarily wrong.

The art of writing is not easily mastered! "Mastered" means, of course, knowing something perfectly. Therefore, the phrase "*mastered to perfection*" (A10) is redundant, and this was also commented on by some native subjects. Whether "*pulling France up on her feet*" (A10) should be regarded as a lexical problem or an idiomatic one is difficult to say. Idiomatically one would say "put back on her feet" or "pull up by the bootstraps", and it seems we have a mixing of these two expressions. I don't believe it to be an interference from Swedish, since the common expression would be "få henne på fötter" - and I don't honestly believe it to be a mix between the two idiomatic possibilities.

Therefore I have chosen to include it in this chapter, though it may be a feature of personal stylistics, and/or associations. Some native subjects would rather say "as soon as I got to France" than the used "*as soon as I had come to France*" (A10) and since this rendering leads to a lexical shift (come-get) as well as a tense shift, I have decided to include it here. "Come" is not as frequently used in English as "komma" in Swedish, at least not in the sense of "arrive".

There are of course also cases where there is no linguistic problem, although a word is incorrectly used. "*Manufacture of high-technology*" (A8) can be taken as such an example - as one native subject pointed out, one does not manufacture technology. "Get" in the sense of "receive" is rarely used by the English in formal (written) contexts. Non-native speakers tend to use it too much, as in e.g "*I even got the club's scarf ... last Christmas* (A8)" where a native speaker would have preferred "I was given" or similar.

The expression "*doing half the teaching load*" (B4) used by one referee in a reference letter was considered ugly - one does not "do a load". "Do" was also generally commented on: it is said to be overused in texts written by non-native speakers of English.

The expression "*it would therefore be essential*" (B4) will be commented on in the chapter about tense and aspect: "would" is conditional and "essential" is definitely necessary. Another cultural phenomenon which comes through on the level of lexicology is "making babies" (A10) - as one native subject commented "no English person would say that she can't wait to get home and get laid".(See also chapter 7)

"*Dusting curtains and carpets*" (A2) is probably a case of interference from Swedish (cf. "damma mattor") but it does not work in English.

"Matched", when speaking about clothes, (A1) is a verb misused due to transfer: L2 - L1 - L2. "Went together" would have been the natural expression for a native subject. "*Go to have some cereals*" (A1) is not comfortable ; "go to have" would imply "going out", and going out was not the intended interpretation of this writer (she went to the kitchen). "Cereals" is commented on in chapter 5.1.1 on singular/plural. "*Walking towards the kitchen*" is commented on in chapter 5.3.3 about prepositions, "towards" would imply a large house, which is not necessarily the case in the text in question.

Research projects are not "carried on" as one referee wrote. A professor does not "guide" a writer's thesis, the correct term would be "supervise".

"I think" is an expression often overused in texts written by non-native speakers of English. One native subject believed it to be a result of interference from the Finnish "luulen", but as "I think" could not be rendered as "luulen" in all cases, I am not entirely convinced. "Think" has been commented on earlier as well (see chapter 4.1.1).

4.4.4 Adjectives

"Current", as used in "*the subject is still very current*" (A6) is commented on as unusual but not necessarily wrong. The same can be said for "*several possible readings*" (A6) - the expression is not incorrect, but the idea of multivalency otherwise conveyed in the text is lost to a native reader's reception. (See also above, chapter 4.1.1, nouns: possibility)

"*Active student*" (B8) is too elliptical an expression to be meaningful. The same would go for the "*unusual independence*"(B1) one student was claimed to be of: cf. usual independence - not a linguistic problem but rather a logical one.

A word like "Finland-Swedish" (B10) is problematic. Harlock's Swedish-English dictionary gives this term for the phenomenon, but I have not been able to find it anywhere else, and several native subjects reacted to it: they did not find it logical to use this adjective-noun combination and suggested "Finnish-Swedish", "Finland's Swedes", "Finland Swedes", "Finnish Swedes" or even Swedish Finns". I do not regard this as a real lexical problem, or even a problem of near-native proficiency, but it is rather the fact that the phenomenon as such is unknown to a large extent to the British that makes it difficult. The fact that a near-native speaker (Swedish-speaking) used the term mainly brings forth the cultural difference: to a Finland-Swede the linguistic background also means the cultural background and is therefore worth mentioning.

Another problematic phrase, used by both native and non-native writers of reference letters was "*She appears to have a sound and stable personality*", and one native subject quickly drew the conclusion that the person in question was "not overtly schizophrenic" - however, I tend not to agree quite with the subject's interpretation, it lies in the nature of a written reference to use careful phrasing, one would not want to be charged with giving false references if the person turns out not to be very stable after all.

Repetition of the vocabulary does not necessarily mean that the writer is non-native, according to the native subjects reading the text, but each time the feature was commented on, the text had actually been written by a non-native speaker. "Excellent", "interesting", (and "interest"-based words in general) "necessary" etc. were words used surrepetitiously by non-native writers. I don't believe this is really due to a very limited vocabulary, but rather to a certain carelessness: either the writers don't notice their repetitions or else they do not bother to think of synonyms.

In some cases, a word is incorrect because it belongs to another word class: e.g. "magic", as used in "*There was something magic about the silhouettes of the bridges against the yellow sky*" (A9).

A "*full course meal*" (A10) is not an accepted way of expressing a meal with many courses: it is not idiomatic, and too ambiguous ("no courses were half") to be considered comfortable.

"*Present Scotland*" (A8) is not very comfortable, should be "present-day Scotland".

"*Such an essential part of my life*" (A2) is not considered a comfortable combination, as all parts are essential.

"*The right prerequisites*" (B4) which one referee talked about is tautologous - but so it would be in the writer's native language as well.

wherefore it cannot really be considered a feature of non-nativeness. The expression "*it would therefore be essential*" (B4) will be commented on in the chapter about tense and aspect: "would" is conditional and "essential" is definitely necessary. (See above, chapter 4.1.2) One referee called a MSc program "excellent" in a letter of reference ("*I recommend him sincerely for your excellent MSc programme*") (B4), and this was regarded as empty flattery, not very typically British.

4.4.5 Adverbs

"Extraordinarily" in "*since it was so extraordinarily cheap*" (A4) is said to be "a little wordy-zealous as m. adj. (**sic!**) and unnecessary after 'so'"."Such" is another problematic word. It usually refers backward, but in the phrase "*she would have no difficulties whatever in coping with such employment in an English-speaking country where the highest demands are made on the use of English*" (B8) it obviously refers to the use of language, i.e forward. In this particular context it is not only incorrectly used, it is unnecessary, and only adds to the general impression of the text as being "wordy".

The phrase "*she would have no difficulties whatever in coping...*" (see above) contains another problem, which also occurs in other texts: "whatever" and "whatsoever" are not always interchangeable, since there is a slight shift in emphasis. The expression "*exactly the type*" (see above) is not quite comfortable, according to the native subjects, as a type can not be very exact. " *It is only a pity*" (B8) - "only" is superfluous and the sentence would read better without it - however, this phenomenon can be seen as a feature of the writer's personal style, and need not necessarily be considered a linguistic problem.

4.4.6 Pronouns

Pronouns, articles and questions of deixis will be dealt with in chapter 4.2 concerned with syntax. There are a few examples I would like to mention in this context, however, since it is not really a matter of deictic problems or in any way incorrect pronouns, but the context they are used in, i.e the words they refer to, make them odd to a native speaker, or turns the meaning around a bit.

"*The kind of student who*" (B1) is an example of pronominal confusion: student that/which and person who. "Else" and "other" are not interchangeable in English, e.g "*It is impossible to think of these places with anything else than admiration*" (A9) where "other" would be correct, but the best expression probably "except".

"*Two twins*" (A8), an expression used by one non-native writer, is not correct if it refers to a set of twins, as is the case. "Two twins" would mean four persons, but even then it would not be correct.

4.4.7 Prepositions

Like pronouns, prepositions are not really dealt with in this chapter. However, here as well, I would like to give a few examples, since in some cases the prepositional choice makes no grammatical/syntactic difference, only a lexical one.

"*Beyond doubt*" (B1), an expression used in some reference letters, is not incorrect, but a native speaker would be content to use "without doubt". Many of the problems in the reference letters are of this kind: the referee "tries too hard on behalf of the person" and this leads to linguistic excess and only makes matters worse.

A prepositional/lexical problem can be found in the phrase "*When you eat, you talk*" in text A10. This prepositional choice would indicate that eating is a prerequisite for talking, whereas the probable intention of the writer would be better brought forth had the preposition been "whilst". "When" is not incorrect, and by no means all native subjects commented on it - and again, I think we can regard this as an example of "failing logic" if we choose to see it as problematic.

In this context, "*a decline in the oil-boom*" (A8) can be mentioned, though it will be further discussed in the chapter about prepositions, since it is not the preposition per se that is difficult, but mainly the nouns it refers to. There cannot be a decline in a boom: but this is again rather a logical problem than a linguistic one.

4.4.8 Other lexical problems

"Even" is another word which tends to be overused in the writings of non-native speakers: in some contexts it is misused, but mainly it is not incorrectly used, only used too often.

In text A9, we find the only example of a clear mixing of norms: "*They were architectural masterpieces - too perfect, too beautiful to be worn by children's play or continuous cleaning*" "Worn", which is American, does not fit in a mainly British text, should be "spoilt". Americanisms were commented on in some other cases as well, but mainly so that the whole text was American.

Especially in text A3, written by an American undergraduate, "however" is overused and not always correctly put into the sentence.

Ellipsis and contractions are problematical areas within the concept of lexical features. "Two times", used by one non-native writer, really should be "twice" (all the native subjects commented on this), and in written informal dialogue "I will" should be "I'll". Several of the texts contained these features of style-shifting and register shifts. The expressions used are correct, but do not fit the context. This is a general problem for non-natives, cf. Coppieters (1987) and Kirschner (1984).

5. SYNTACTIC FEATURES

Within this category, I will look at some grammatical features commented on by the native subjects involved in the experiment, but the area as such is not very problematical. Of more interest than the grammatical "mistakes" are the features dealing with sentence length and sentence structure. There is generally a noticeable difference between sentence length to be found in texts written by non-native speakers and texts written by native English speakers, which is in opposition with the results achieved by Linnarud (1986). However, Linnarud was dealing with children's writings, and she also mentions that there may be a difference between young and adult writers. Also, the sentence structure is different, more sophisticated structures can be found in the texts written - or thought to have been written - by native speakers of English. The variation is, not surprisingly, much larger in the A-text category than for the reference letters. As the genre of reference letters is so closed, the standard can be easily perceived and achieved by a native speaker. Hultman and Westman (1977) also found that certain types of adult texts in Swedish had shorter sentences on average than school compositions. Linnarud also states that the "ability to vary sentence structure, giving rise to a variety of sentence lengths may be a more important factor in distinguishing between the native and the non-native writer than mean sentence length."(Linnarud 1986, 53)

Table 21.

text nr	w/s	longest s.	shortest s.	longest-shortest
A7(nat)	24.36	38 words	7 words	31 words
A5	27.51	53 words	8 words	45 words
A2	19.41	46 words	4 words (x2)	42 words
A10	25.70	56 words	3 words	53 words
A4	13.03	38 words	4 words (x5)	34 words
A6	17.33	34 words	4 words	30 words
A3(nat)	16.58	26 words	4 words	22 words
A8	21.55	47 words	6 words	41 words
A1	9.61	23 words	1 word	22 words
A9	16.45	34 words	3 words	31 words

The average sentence length for the non-native A-type texts was 18.82, and for the native A-type texts 20.47. As the number of texts (especially native texts, only 2) is so small, these figures can not really be compared. We find a better comparison if we compare the texts **believed** to have been written by native speakers to those believed to have been written by non-native speakers.

I will count texts A7, A5 and A2 among the former, A4, A6, A3, A8, A1, and A9 among the latter. The first three have all reached an average of below 3, and were believed by a majority of native subjects to have been written by native speakers of English. A10 is here treated separately, as it was the text with the most evenly distributed marks; 3:3:3:4. What we then find, is an average of 23.76 words/sentence for the highest ranked texts, 25.7 for A10, and 15.93 words/sentence for the lowest ranked texts.

Three of the texts lie above the average calculated by Kučera and Francis (1970) for written texts (22.7). Two of these were believed, by a majority of the native subjects, to have been written by native speakers of English. One of them was thought by 6 native subjects to have been written by a native speaker, and by 7 to have been written by a non-native speaker. Although none of the native subjects mentioned sentence length more than a short comment on "short sentences" concerning text A1, the number of words per sentence seems to be an important factor. According to this calculation, the variety of sentence length would not play such a large role as Linnarud (1986) suggests, but a larger sample could give more information about this.

For the B-type texts, the sentence length seems to be of no importance. Using the same measurements for these texts, B5, B6, B10 and B7 are letters believed to have been written by native speakers by a majority of the native subjects, B1, B3 and B4 form a middle group with 6 native subjects classifying them as written by native speakers and 7 as written by non-natives, and finally B9 and B8 as non-native texts. For the first group we get an average of 20.35 words/sentence, for the second group we get 23.39, that is a slightly higher average for a group ranking further on the list, and the last group reaches an average of 22.35, which is between the two groups. It would seem then, that sentence length plays a smaller role for determining the linguistic background of a writer within such a closed genre as letters of reference.

Table 22.

text nr	**w/s**	**longest s.**	**shortest s.**	**longest-shortest**
B5(nat)	17.56	31 words	10 words	21 words
B6	20.93	34 words	12 words	22 words
B10	20.25	31 words	13 words	18 words
B7(nat)	22.67	35 words	13 words	22 words
B1	28.17	43 words	9 words	34 words
B3(nat)	24.29	39 words	16 words	23 words
B4	17.71	32 words	5 words	27 words
B9	19.79	31 words	8 words	23 words
B8	25.00	35 words	17 words	18 words

When we look at table 22, we find that words/sentence or variation of sentence length plays no important role in the grading. It is true that some of the native subjects commented on letters B8 and B1, the two letters with the longest sentences calling them "wordy", but this was not a major indication of the linguistic status of the writer. They have not been ranked according to sentence length, as is evident. However, I put this down to the nature of the text type, and maintain that sentence length in freer forms of writing is a useful means for revealing the linguistic status of the writer. This does not hold for all writers, of course, as there is always a personal factor involved. In actual fact, texts A5, with an average of 27.51 w/s, the highest average of all A-texts, B1 (28.17), and B8 (25.00), as well as B10, which reached an average of 20.25 words/sentence, were all written by the same person.

5.1 Singular/plural

The problem of using the singular/plural forms correctly can be divided into three sub-categories. In some cases, a noun is used in a plural form which does not exist (or which changes the meaning of the noun to an incorrect one in the context), sometimes there is no numerical concord between the noun and the verb, and sometimes the writer switches from a singular form to a plural form, thus making the deixis incorrect.

5.1.1. Incorrect pluralization of noun

The most important case of incorrect pluralization of a noun which should have been in the singular is the already mentioned "cereals" (A1). The English word has two functions, and is countable only when referring to what grows in the fields - rye, wheat etc. The kind one has for breakfast is uncountable, and should therefore have been "cereal" in the text in question. All native subjects commented on this, but it was not seen as a major indicator of the writer's status as a non-native speaker of English. However, the text where it occurred ranked rather low on the list, with an average of 4.38, so it would seem no "real near-native-speaker" would make this mistake. It can therefore be regarded as marginal. (One native subject thought it to be a case of interference from the Finnish partitive form.) We also find, in a text written by a native English speaker, "heros" (Am., A3) where most native subjects would have preferred "hero", which is an example of loss of distinction between type and token. In text A10 we find "*those were the only times I...*", which was considered incorrect by one native subject, who claimed that either "the only time I " or "the only times when I " would be the correct alternative. "Ornaments" and "disinfectants", used in sentences "*we noticed how graceful the buildings were and how rich with ornaments*" and "*they sprayed disinfectants all over*" (A9) were commented on by some native subjects. However, using the singular form would not be a better option, but it is clear that non-native writers should be careful about "translating" Swedish uncountables into plural English forms. Rephrasing would probably have been better.

"*Some of the expenses*" in one reference letter (B9) was also commented on: a native speaker would prefer "her expenses" or the singular form: some of the expense. One non-native writer, talking about the former Soviet Union, claimed there to be "*room for reforms*" (A9), which the native subjects would have preferred to have in the singular. "*Without any reservations*", found in a letter of reference (B8), is seen as exaggerated and would have been more "English" had it been "without reservation". One native subject also commented on the prase "*she should have no difficulties whatever*" occurring in the same letter, saying "difficulty" would be preferable: this can again be seen as linguistic excess and "trying too hard". (See further development in chapter 7).

One writer also made a less important mistake in talking about a hit song, "Letter from America" and calling it "Letters from America" (A8). This cannot be regarded as a linguistic mistake, but it was commented on because "a native speaker would know the title of the song".

5.1.2 Missing concord between noun and verb

This category only includes one item, "*stovies is*", and the mistake is commented on only by two native subjects, which can be easily understood, since the word is Scottish ("potato-stew"), and can only be found in the Oxford Dictionary of the English Language and in dialect dictionaries. The text where it appears (A8) has a total average of 4.08, and contains several indicators of being written by a non-native speaker of English.

5.1.3 Lack of deictic concord

This category also includes only one item, commented on by only one native subject. Since it is rather an important feature in written texts I have chosen to comment on it, briefly in this context, but the problem is further developed in the chapter dealing with rhetorical ineptitude.

The text where this discord can be found is text A6, with an average of 3.39, a piece of literary criticism. First the writer talks about "women" and then she uses the pronoun "she", which leads to a loss of concord in deixis, or, as one native subject states, loss of distinction between type and token.

5.2 Article usage

In this category, there are several subcategories. Sometimes an article is used where there should have been a pronoun, sometimes there is a definite article when there should have been an indefinite one, or vice versa, sometimes a necessary article is left out, and sometimes an unnecessary or incorrect article is inserted. Most of the problems of article usage were to be found in texts written by Finnish-speaking writers, but, especially type/token related difficulties were seen also in texts written by native Swedish-speakers. In particular, text A9 was found to contain rather many of these mistakes.

5.2.1 Articles instead of pronouns

In text number A8, a report from Scotland, the author, speaking about a football team, writes: "*Unfortunately the game is very uneven...*", where she really should have written "their game", according to some of the native subjects. The same kind of example we find in letter B4, where the referee writes: "*He is considering making it a career*". This was commented on as "sounding like one of many", and "his career" or "a career of it" would be more appropriate

In text A10, we find another example of wrongly used indefinite article: "*eating is more than satisfying a hunger*", where "your hunger" or rather perhaps a completely different structure altogether would be preferred, since "a hunger" is generally metaphoric.

"*Making a mistake like...*" (A5) was commented on by one native subject, who said that "**a** mistake cannot be **like**", which, of course, if we think about it, is very logical and clear, however, most of us would make that kind of "mistake" in any language - wouldn't we?

5.2.2 Definite vs. indefinite articles

This phenomenon is part of the type/token distinction, which is also commented on in chapter 5.5. Two examples of wrongly used definite articles can be found in the sample: text A9 "*...the air was filled with tobacco smoke, the particular brand called mahorka*" where a better alternative would have been "a particular", according to the native subjects who commented on it, and , same text: "*I always had a feeling I was looking at it for the last time*", where definite article would have been preferred, as "a feeling" is very general (type), whereas we are here dealing with quite a particular feeling, wherefore token "the" would be the normal choice.

5.2.3 Overuse of articles

In text A9 we find an expression "*studying at the university*", where the native subjects said there should be no definite article, as "university" is treated in the same way as "school", i.e you go to school, study at university etc. One referee mentioned somebody studying "*the English language*" (B6), and this was commented on as "arising from seeing it from a 'foreign' perspective, i.e not part of it: able to conceive of it as a separate definable body."

Text B9, like text B6 written by a native Finnish-speaking person, contained an overuse of definite articles, these being inserted before almost every noun. This is quite to be expected, as Finnish uses no articles, and they form a very difficult feature for a Finnish-speaking person to learn. (cf. Ringbom 1987)

We also find an overuse of the definite article in the phrase : "*they sing in the broadest possible Scots*", where the article should be left out, since this is not really a comparison - there are not several groups of people competing, and this distinction in the article usage is made in English but not in the writer's native language (Swedish) and can therefore be considered a feature of transfer.

5.2.4 Omitting to use necessary articles

There are within the sample a few cases where a necessary article has not been used. "*Interested in problems of bilingualism*" (B9) was commented on, as the definite article is needed before an of-genitive. In A9 the author has written that they "*had seen all tourist attractions you can possibly think of*" (see also chapter 5.7.1, tense), where the article should have been inserted, according to some of the native subjects. "Going out for a pizza" is the correct way of expressing the action; the indefinite article was left out in text A1.

5.3 Prepositions and prepositional phrases

Prepositions have been commented on in the chapter dealing with lexical problems as well, but as they are of a large syntactical importance, I have included them under this heading, too. Very rarely prepositions are actually totally incorrect within the sample, and one of the two texts where they are was actually written by a native speaker of English. Mainly they give the phrase a slightly different shade of meaning than the writer probably meant it to have, which is why they are particularly interesting when we are dealing with near-native speakers. Prepositions, used differently in every language, are usually quite difficult for a person studying a foreign language to learn correctly. One might have thought that Finnish speakers would have greater difficulties with the prepositions than Swedish speakers, but my results indicate the opposite. This may be due to the fact that Finnish speakers, who learn a completely new way of expressing prepositional relations when they learn English, manage to keep the distinctions between them better than Swedish speakers, who already have a "complete set" in their linguistic system. (Ringbom 1987)

5.3.1 Incorrect prepositions

In text A3, the lowest scoring text by a native speaker of English, we find "*apprehension towards*", where we should have had "apprehension concerning" or "apprehension with regard to", according to some of the native subjects in Sheffield.

In text A6 we find the construction "*in accordance to*", where "with" would have been the correct preposition to follow "accordance". This is an easily made mistake, since "to" is the correct preposition if we use a slightly different form of the word in question, i.e "according to".

One native subject also commented on "*in 1978-1980*" (text B6), saying the correct preposition would be "from", but I think this can be disregarded, as the hyphen would have to be changed to another preposition, "to", if that were to work.

In B6 we also find a couple of more problematic issues concerning prepositions: "*...at the Department of Translation Studies of the University of Helsinki...*", where "at" would be the correct preposition, and "*I...examined her for her final examinations...*", where "in" would have been better.

In B9 the referee becomes unwittingly quite funny when he talks about "*studying the topic in children*", which obviously is not a very comfortable way of expressing it.

5.3.2 Omitted or unnecessary prepositions

In text A4, the author writes: "*It's so hard to get a hold of one these days*", where "in" would have been needed to make the sentence sound native. Text A2 would also need "on" in the phrase "*This was the case the evening that stands out in my memory*".

As for unnecessary prepositions, we find "*doing half of the teaching load*" (B4), where "of" is not necessary, although it is not incorrect, only odd to most native subjects. (This sentence was commented on in chapter 4.2, verbs, as well).

5.3.3 Maladroitly used prepositions

These are, as usual, the most difficult to learn and to spot. The prepositions in question can be used with the verb/noun in question, but is dependent on the context.

Within this category, we find expressions such as "*she would be suitable for study*" (B1), where the referee naturally meant that the girl would be a good student, not that she should be examined as some interesting specimen, "*I had heard of Afghanistan*" (A9), where the author means the war: the prepositional choice tends to shift the meaning from the war to the country, and that makes the whole story a bit confusing.

Another case of a maladroitly used preposition is the already mentioned "*caring about myself only*". This may, however, be a conscious prepositional choice (see chapter 7, other features of non-nativeness). If not, "about" should be substituted with "of" to make the sentence more easily understood the way most native subjects understood it, i.e not having to **take care** of anybody but herself. "About" will make it seem as though she was completely absorbed in herself and not interested in anybody else's feelings or well-being.

We also find "*walking towards the kitchen*" (A1), where the prepositional choice would imply a large house, which is not necessarily the case in the text. However, only one native subject commented on this.

In one reference letter (B1) we find the expression "*...and he is beyond doubt extremely suitable for study...*" (see also above) , where the choice of "beyond" is of course not incorrect, but seems excessive, and thus tends to reveal a certain linguistic insecurity and quite "gives the game away", so to speak.

5.4. Genitive

The main difficulty concerning genitive usage is the overgeneralization of the "of x" - "x's" in the texts, the most important example of which is a phrase reading "*my life's first cockroach*", found in text A9. Other problematic constructions where the genitive should have been used are found in text A5, "time pressure" which is an impossible construction and should have been rendered as "the pressure of time" (this can be regarded as either case or conceptual confusion). Text A9, again, contains one more "odd" construction, "*the busy city life*" (according to one native subject this should have been "this busy city's life"), this is not, however, necessarily true, as the phrase is not incorrect as it reads. Another similar expression, although not quite a genitive, can also be found in the same text, i.e. "*the station in Leningrad*", where one native subject would have preferred "the Leningrad station".

5.5 Pronouns

A couple of pronouns have been mentioned in chapter 4, and I won't comment any further on them. There are, however, three other cases of pronominal confusion I would like to mention here. In text A9, we find "*This was no TV screen, it was a human being...*", and this was, by one native subject, commented on as "human beings are never referred to as 'it', not even in this rhetorical context". No other native subjects commented on this particular phrase, and, I believe we can safely assume that the native subject in question reacted rather subjectively to the phrase.

In text A6 there are a couple of features to which several of the native subjects reacted. Text A6 is a piece of literary criticism, and the author writes about "women" and "girls" and then switches to "she". Some of the native subjects thought this could be an example of loss of distinction between type and token, but it seems more likely that it be a matter of hurried writing, which often leads to this kind of switching. Anyway, as all native subjects pointed out, it leads to a missing concord in deixis, and halts the flow of the text.

5.6 Punctuation

There is a clear difference between English and Swedish punctuation rules, but in both languages the usage is becoming less rigid. This may be the reason for the relatively few comments the native subjects made on this issue. Three texts were said to contain far too many, often misused, hyphens (A6, A9, and A10). In one case a comma was misplaced: "*which I neither can, nor want, to penetrate*" (A2), where the logical place for the comma would be **after** "to", as "can" does not take "to", and the placing in the phrase would indicate that both verbs take "to". However, this was considered a minor point, and not a mistake no native speaker could make.

5.7 Tense and aspect

In this category, we find surprisingly many mistakes. I use the adverb "surprisingly", because these mistakes would be as obvious in the writer's native languages, and I therefore see no reason for them. English doesn't really differ from Swedish or Finnish in their usage of tense, with the exception of the progressive form, which does not exist in Swedish, and has a more limited usage in Finnish than in English. Most of the mistakes are not, however, of this kind, but rather a result of a mixture of tenses within the same sentence or a discord between the tense of the verb and the adverb.

5.7.1 Mixture of tenses within a sentence or paragraph

Text A1 "*the sun was shining - this day - she noticed later*" shows both mixture of verb tense and discord between the verbs and the adverb "this day". In the same text we also find "had said" out of place.

Text A9 also contains the same kind of feature: "*We had seen all tourist attractions you can possibly think of*" (see also chapter 5.2.4, articles) where "could" would have been the better choice, as that would have correlated with "had seen". We also find a mixture of tenses in text B5, written by a native speaker: "*The second subsidiary subject was French, and the degree also includes a general studies component*".

5.7.2 Discord between verb and adverb

There are several examples of this kind within the sample. Text A5 "*... armed with ... ,an English-Dutch parlour of useful phrases and (later) a pocket dictionary, I set about my...*", B4 "*it would be essential*", where would is conditional whereas essential is definitely necessary, thus making it odd (see also chapters 4.2 verbs and 4.3 adjectives), and B8 where when and now are incorrectly used in a sentence reading "*When XX now applies for a place in ...*" can be mentioned.

5.7.3 Aspect (progressive vs non-progressive forms)

Text B9 uses a perfect tense where a progressive one would have been preferred: "*She is very interested in problems of .... and has proposed to study the topic...*". The letter in question is a letter of reference for an application for a travel grant, and the native subjects would have preferred the progressive form "is proposing to" in order to make it clear that she is going to do this. We find a similar example in text B8 , the sentence mentioned in chapter 5.7.2, "*When XX now applies*", where the verb would, according to my native spokesmen, normally be in the progressive form. Otherwise, this problem is mainly found in the reverse direction: a progressive form is used where a non-progressive would have been preferred. Within this category, we find B9 "*about to start working*", where "work" would have been preferred.

Another example, also with "work", can be found in text B3, a reference letter written by a native English speaker: "*working experience*", where some native subjects would have preferred "work experience".

We also find, in text A9: "*The parquet floorings were artistic, the ceilings painted in light colours often gold included...*" which would have been more comfortable had the aspect of the verb been changed: "often including gold".

5.7.4 Other problems of tense

In some other cases, we find a tense misused: text B1 "*the type of student who profits*" where the native subjects would prefer "would profit", as the referee is recommending the student in question for a trip abroad, which has not yet taken place, and therefore it would be more logical to say she **would** profit, as one can never be completely certain . In text A4, the writer uses "may" where "might" would have been more suitable.

5.8 Phrase (sentence) structure and word order

General features within this category found in the sample include, according to the native subjects involved, a lack of subordination, a high degree of redundancy, and making long sentences out of series of short phrases without effective conjunctions.

Other, more specific problems include such items as adjunct placement (e.g A1: "*It was only half past eight she noticed later*", where "later" would, according to some native subjects, be better placed in the beginning of the sentence). As for text A9, we find "*especially the park ...astonished me*" where the order should be reversed, since sentences begun with "especially" usually don't have their own predicate.

In text A3 (native speaker) we find "*the book has in it a hero*" which is not very fluent, and several of the native subjects involved in the grading of the texts would have preferred "has as its hero" or similar.

Text A10 contains a passage reading "*third-year student at the university*", where one native subject said that "third year university student" would have been preferable.

In text B3, we find "*He is in a position to take the fullest advantage of educational opportunities abroad which may be offered to him, and I feel he would make a contribution as well*", which should be "also" and placed instead of "and", and so "and" is redundant. Text B3 is written by a native speaker, so we find that also native speakers make these mistakes: as one native subject commented, B3 seems to be written by a native speaker who has been abroad quite a long time and therefore let his language get a bit rusty. This is actually the case, the writer of text B3 has lived in Finland for more than 20 years, but English is still the only language he speaks. This goes to show that also the people one usually communicates with influence one's language, as this writer mostly deals with university students and staff, whose command of English is not always very fluent.

In text A6 we find a slight mistake in the order of the words when the author writes "*if she here is questioning*" which should be rendered as "if she is here questioning" in English. (The word order is correct in Swedish, a case of transfer on the phrase level.)

Text A4 also contains a slightly unusual word order; it is not incorrect, but seems odd to most native subjects, although quite a few (5) of them believe it to have been written, either clearly (2) or probably (3) by a native speaker of English. This is the order of the adjectives in "*a thin old lady*", where the reversed order would have been more natural. Text A10 contains a similar feature, the author writes about four children, aged "*10, 8, 6, 4*", and the native subjects would have preferred to reverse the order and start with the smallest figure. This would, however, also be the natural order in the writer's native language (Swedish), and I am therefore inclined to believe it to be a feature of the writer's personal style. Also, the text in question was regarded as written by a native speaker by 6 native subjects: 3 of them "clearly" and 3 "probably".

In B9, ranked rather low on the list (av. 3.77 and with only 2 native subjects saying it was written by a native speaker), we find two examples of incorrect word order: "*which has also practical relevance*", where the word order should be "which also has" and "*I would like to support her application warmly, and hope sincerely that it will be successful*" where we should have "and sincerely hope".

B7, written by a native speaker, has an awkward sentence structure in "*In class she ....., and is a pleasure to teach in that material even badly presented will still be grasped*", which would have made for better reading had it been "...in that even badly presented material..."

Text A9, which was the essay/article ranking the lowest on the list (av. 4.38 and only one mark for "clearly native" and none for "probably native") contained some problematic issues in the phrase structure respect. The first three sentences "*When I got off the train at the station in Leningrad, I stepped right into the busy city life. Travellers were running to and fro carrying bags and cases. Pidgeons fluttered their wings and cooed.*" should, according to one native subject (although several commented on them and wanted them changed somehow), be turned into one with subordinate clauses. "Rather would" ("... *we decided that we rather would have insects than...*") in the same text should be switched around so as to give "would rather", and "*often gold included*" (see also chapter 5.7.2, tense/aspect) should be turned around and the aspect should be changed: one suggestion for making it better was given by a native subject: "including gold". This, however, is not the only possible solution, and probably not the best, but it was offered by one native subject and is, as such, of interest. There are also other examples found in the text: "*By learning poems by heart we studied phonetics*" (see also above, "especially...astonished me"). Text B8 (also av. 4.38) is said to contain a formal and convoluted sentence structure, which makes it rather difficult to read and often very non-nativelike, and several points have been explicitly pointed out. We have such phrases as "*The staff at our department actively encourage initiatives to go abroad like hers*", where the prepositional phrase "to go abroad" should be final, as the phrase "like hers" clearly, within the context, must refer to "initiatives". The word order found in the text confuses this, and makes the whole sentence rather awkward - and clearly "non-nativelike" in the eyes of native readers, although they do understand what the writer is trying to say.

Text A6 contains one point commented on by one native subject: "*it is not until recently we have heard the expression 'God is mother too'*", and the native subject in question said that it is unusual to begin a sentence with a personal pronoun, which I must admit I find rather amazing.

Finally we find, in text B4, two phrases which do not run smoothly: "*known XX only for a short time*", where "only" should go either before "known" ("I have only known XX for a short time") or after "for" ("I have known XX for only a short time"). This may be explained by the writer's native language, Finnish.

6. CONCEPTUAL CONFUSION AND RHETORICAL "INEPTITUDE"

I have decided to treat these subjects in the same chapter, since they are quite closely related, and some native subjects have chosen to refer one problem to the "conceptual confusion-category", whereas others have included the same feature under "rhetorical ineptitude". Quite a few of the native subjects have left the conceptual confusion-slot blank, and if we were to consider it independently, it would not give us very much to go on where non-native features are concerned. Although little or no conceptual confusion was found in the texts believed to have been written by native speakers, and rather a lot can be found in texts believed to have been written by non-native speakers of English, it would seem that the inclusion of this category may be misleading in the grading of the texts, as also the native speakers involved in the experiment have problems with this - two of them had rhetorically and conceptually very good texts, whereas the other two made as many "mistakes" as the average near-native speaker of the experiment. Some native subjects, as discussed in chapter 3, have used the writers' presumed intelligence as their basis for grading the texts, and it is precisely within this category that such judgments are made. Not all the native subjects have fallen into this trap, and I would like to quote subjects X and XI here, to show how "conceptual confusion" can even be a sign of nativeness to the intelligent reader.

Subject X (about text A7, ranked as number 1, written by a native English-speaker):

> "Curiously, what makes this text seem 'native' (-American) is the rapid, **ir**regular shifts of **tone**: register, sentence-length & form & rhetoric. Thus far, 2 features seem to characterize 'non-native' texts, and their absence is notable here; while their **presence** is more evident in otherwise 'nearer native' samples. The first is an inappropriate use of reductions or ellipses (with inappropriate **non**-use) - high degrees of lexical and formal redundancy alternating with highly elliptical sentences which combine metonymic substitutions with modal or quasi-idiomatic structures. In this text redundancy serves a known (by a 'competent' reader) purpose, just as

> idiomatic reduction refers to 'known', shared coinages. This produces an interesting point; while 'time pressure' (A5) is intelligible, even intelligent, its lack of structural or formative precedent sticks - the reader feels there is 'something wrong'. Conversely, the idiomatic use of the stream-image ('to pursue/follow a stream') in A7 does not stand analysis: streams don't fail. Here is, if you like, a 'conceptual confusion' over pursuance; in the idiom, where **we** fail is in **following** a stream that goes nowhere, not in **being** one. Yet while there **is** 'something wrong' here, we do not notice it because both 'form' and 'content' of the idiom have precedents, hence have familiarity.
>
> The second outstanding feature is 'rhetoric'...In many (e.g. A5, A10) the adherence to a level of rhetorical 'rigidity' which would be comic to the Augustans discloses only comprehending reception of the texts: form not so much obscures but removes the possibility of attention to content. In A7, however, such rhetorical pomposity as is sustained is never foregrounded, but serves to make the text generically recognisable, as perhaps 'history text-book' - not to say, boring."

And native subject XI writes, when commenting on the same text (A7)

> "Variety in sentence construction, rhetorical fluidity & style is genre appropriate. Plus it's very boring. Wider vocabulary (see chapter 4, lexis). Plus impersonality of the narrator. (see chapter 7 cultural differences). No "I think that..." (this will be further commented on below). For all its competency it doesn't actually make perfect sense - which is another feature of a native speaker; familiarity with form means you can pay less attention to the content."

We find, thus, that conceptual confusion does not necessarily indicate a non-native speaker, which is quite in accordance with my theory, since I presumed that a non-native writer would be able to compensate his/her more limited vocabulary and lack of stylistic elegance with a clarity of thought and conceptions, as well as with a good rhetorical knowledge. However, not all non-native writers, if any, have managed to do this. In some cases, the writers have been able to write clear, logical and rhetorically very apt texts, but the majority have not managed to fulfill that. It is evident, that a high educational level and a habit of writing do not automatically lead to a good handling of any language. Whereas it does not follow that non-native speakers are less intelligent than native speakers (cf. table 1, where some non-native texts have done better than some native texts), my hypothesis is nonetheless overthrown.

I will mention some of the more specific points below, but there are some more general features of conceptual confusion and rhetorical "ineptitude" I would like to comment on first, since they seem to be specific to near-native speakers. They would not occur in texts written by less advanced non-native speakers, and they do not appear in all non-native texts in the sample, but some of them are of great interest for the teaching of foreign languages, especially on a university level.

Actually, "ineptitude" is completely wrong as a term for these features, since it is, in fact, the opposite we are dealing with. Some of the texts were commented on as hyper-correct and overpolished. These features were seen by some native subjects as clear indicators of the writer being a non-native speaker of the language. As native subjects X and XI, quoted above, point out: a native text does not always make perfect sense, and any rhetorical pomposity is never foregrounded, whereas the opposite is often the case in texts written by non-native speakers of an advanced proficiency-level.

Native subject X, commenting on text A5, points out that the text is theoretically possible in "native " English, but the "rhetorical overkill" is near-comic and would not surivive a native schoolteacher's correction. He also writes that whereas there is not really any rhetorical ineptitude, there is indeed rhetorical surfeit to be found in the text. Other native subjects have made similar comments, e.g subject IX, who claimed that the text was probably written by a non-native speaker.

> "It is more of a gut feeling rather than a qualified judgment. The writing is almost too polished, too refined - having few individual 'fingerprints' in style to suggest a natural speaker of the language, rather, you have someone who is confident with the language. Someone who has learnt English from the outside in and knows it well in a technical sense rather than a creative sense... verbosity plays a part. Some of the phrasing is a bit convoluted, *"I admit to feeling proud"*, which suggests learnt knowledge rather than implicit understanding and control."

Another native subject, number XI, also says:

> "Far too much rhetoric!! Overuse of stylistic inversion - such as...'In this attitude I was strengthened'. Overuse of technique. Trying too hard to use idiomatic English. Too many adders, or 'aside' clauses, which leave the subject hanging too long, cf. *"The Dutch always speak exceedingly fast, I first tried to persuade myself, but had to remind myself of a fact well-known from textbooks, that it is always the non-native learner who is slow, not the native speaker who is fast."* leaves the 'punchline' flat. Very ego-centric text. Too many 'I's' even for a 1st person narrative. Very un-English, don't you know. Definitely non-native writer as teachers in English schools crack down incredibly hard on such stylization. Such fluency within standard rhetorical norms has been replaced by greater personal/individual eloquence".

What is really interesting here, however, is that not all native subjects agree at all on this. Still speaking about the same text, we find native subject VII saying: "No problems as far as I can see. Excellent use of subordinate clauses (woven with great skill). If only I could write this well. I can't explain the 'Englishness' of this passage largely because it seems too hegemonic." And it continues: native subjects II, IV, V, and XIII are all convinced, by the style and tone of the text, that it has been written by a native speaker of English. However, when we look at chapter 3, we find that especially native subjects X and XI have been particulary correct in their grading of the texts, whereas native subjects II and VII did not manage very well in distinguishing native speakers from non-native speakers, and as for native subject V, the texts written by native speakers of English reached a very poor average. However, the different perceptions of this phenomenon clearly show how difficult it may be for a native speaker to know whether a native or a non-native speaker has written a particular text.

The other major rhetorical feature mentioned by the native subjects is the tendency to use "I think" that occurs in texts written by non-native speakers of English. This is one of the few features easily remedied: perhaps English teachers could point out that it is not nearly as common in English texts as in Swedish/Finnish ones. The native subjects agreed that it is not incorrect, but non-native speakers tend to use it far more often than native speakers. And it is true, that whereas several cases can be found in the non-native part of the sample, there is not one in any of the texts written by native speakers. Whether this is a cultural problem I am not sure. It is of course possible that English people are more self-confident and therefore state their opinions without the softening "I think", but this would not agree with another cultural difference mentioned by the native subjects; the ego-centricism surfacing in two of the texts, namely A5 (see above) and A10. (See also below, chapter 7.)

7. OTHER FEATURES OF NON-NATIVENESS

Having dealt with lexical, syntactic, conceptual and rhetorical features, there are still certain problems which cannot be included in any of these categories, but which play a certain role for the native subjects when determining whether the texts were written by native or non-native English speakers. The major aspect is the difference in cultural outlook, which has been commented on in some instances already. The author of text A10 said she decided to start "*making babies*" as soon as she got home, and native subject XI commented on this saying:

> "The sentiment expressed ... is very un-English ... the implication of the act of making babies is culturally unlikely, you 'have' babies, **passive**, and idiomatically you might said you 'would like to have one', the modality is much more conditional, typical of British reticence. I think this seems more irregular idiomatically in its written form, as colloquial English has more of these forms & spoken it would not be so closely analysed, as the pragmatic aspect would have a greater weight, but as pure text it seems incongruous to read that someone can't wait to go home & get laid."

However, other native subjects who also commented on this expression claimed it to be a native feature, familiarity with English/American slang.

The usage of Finnish/Swedish course ignitions also illustrated the cultural differences between the two linguistic groups: a native English speaker would prefer to use the English equivalents. Another case of cultural differences can be found in text B10, mainly the problematical word "Finland-Swedish" (see also chapter 4.4.3). The only dictionary I have found where the phenomenon is included is Harlock's Swedish-English dictionary, and according to that, Finland-Swedish is the correct expression. However, most native subjects did not find it very comfortable. I believe the problem is mainly a cultural one; to a Finland-Swede it is an important point, whereas an Englishman would probably find the whole feature completely irrelevant.

Several native subjects also commented on a certain ego-centricism found in texts A5 and A10. Text A5 was said to contain far too many 'I's', and in text A10 there was one expression which caught the eyes of many native subjects, i.e "*...gotten used to caring about myself only*", where the prepositional choice implies an ego-centricism that would not be found in an English text (see chapter 6).

Other cultural features commented on are mainly mentioned as signs of nativeness, and these include understatements and an understating tone (especially reference letters, words such as "somewhat") and also the sense of humour-aspect. Here too, understatement plays an important role. As native subject VI points out: "Tone - which somehow seems British - perhaps to do with understated humour and irony."

8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Lexical, syntactic, rhetorical and cultural aspects of proficiency in writing have been examined and discussed in order to try to find out how near-native proficiency differs from native proficiency in writing. In several cases we have found that native subjects cannot distinguish a near-native speaker from a native speaker of English (see chapter 3). Actually, in as many as 24 cases native speakers were wrongly assigned to the non-native group, which gives a percentage of 37.50%, and in 68 cases, or 35.23%, non-native speakers were assigned to the native speaker-group. The total percentage of incorrect classification is 35.80%. Only two texts in the material were correctly identified as either native (A7) or non-native (B2) by all native subjects involved. Four texts written by non-native speakers of English (B6, B10, A5 and A2) were assigned to the native speaker-category by a majority of the native subjects, and two of the texts written by native speakers (B3 and A3) were classified as written by non-natives by a majority of the native subjects. In one case, text A10, the distribution of the marks was particularly even: 3:3:3:4. From this, one can draw the conclusion that it is extremely difficult, not to say impossible, for a native speaker of a language to be certain of whether a text was actually written by one of his compatriots or not. Actually, the highest percentage of correct conclusions drawn by any native subject involved was 75%. Two native subjects were wrong in 50% of their classifications. Interestingly enough, the native subjects did not always classify the native speakers correctly: in fact, no native subject referred all texts written by native speakers to the correct category. This can lead to several different conclusions: the native subjects involved are not competent to judge whether a speaker is native or not, the native speakers involved do not really have a native competence but some of the non-natives do, or there is no clear way to determine whether writers of such high proficiency are native or non-native speakers of English. I prefer the last. But these results also show that there is no clear definition of native proficiency to be found, since all native speakers involved unquestionably have a native proficiency in their language. They also show that non-native speakers of English are often able to compensate some of their linguistic problems by their habit of writing, their knowledge of the English culture (e.g text A2, the ghost-story, of which it was said that "the register is formal, typically that of a native speaker as used in the late 19th and early 20th century", and this shows familiarity with culture as well as language), and other such factors.

Having examined all features and examples commented on by the native subjects involved in the experiment, as well as statistical features (lexical sophistication, variation, and density), we find that there is no clear answer to the question "what is near-native proficiency and how does it differ from native proficiency?". However, some points have been brought forth. Statistically analyzed, the texts written by native speakers in a more "open" genre, i.e essays and articles, show a greater lexical density and lexical sophistication than those written by non-native speakers.

We also find that non-native speakers, even at this advanced level, have problems with English collocations, conventionalized word combinations. They have difficulties using them and often avoid them, and whenever they are incorrect, as e.g "find interpretation", native speakers tend to react to the "un-Englishness", although there is nothing exactly wrong with them.

We also find that a native speaker is generally confident enough in his language not to resort to extravagant rhetorics, and in several cases the native subjects involved mentioned that the writer was able to use a wide vocabulary, both very technical and ordinary words in the same text, whereas non-native speakers normally write either formally or colloquially. In some cases, however, non-native speakers also shift register in a text; unfortunately they often take too big a step and style-shifting becomes evident and non-nativelike.

As for implications for language teaching, I believe one point here could be stylistics. This could be stressed in advanced language teaching (university level) in order to make more proficient writers. Many of the features commented on were of this kind, e.g. questions of rhetoric, cultural differences, and also sentence length.

9. SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

It might be of interest to examine a more homogeneous sample to find lexical differences between texts written by native and near-native speakers of English. Lexical individuality might be an interesting feature to examine, as might other lexical features (e.g lexical density, sophistication and variation) within a larger sample. Syntactic features, such as subordination and coordination, could be more closely looked at, as well, but there also a larger sample would be needed.

It could be of interest to compare writers of different linguistic background, because as far as I have been able to find out, this has not been done. Coppieters included speakers of various linguistic background, but the comparison was very superficial and did not include all aspects. In a test similar to the one I conducted, one might include texts written by four or five different nationalities to see how the writers' native languages' relationship with English affect the categorization of the texts. I believe it would perhaps not be a very good idea, in that case, to include Finnish-speakers as one nationality, as advanced learners of English in Finland also have studied Swedish to a quite advanced level, and it would therefore be difficult to determine whether there is any L2-influence in L3. Because of this, I believe that completely different linguistic backgrounds would be of greater interest.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Andrews, E. 1990. Pierce's Emotional Interpretant: A Key to Bilingualism. *IRAL, XXVIII*, 185-200.

Beardsmore, H. 1982. *Bilingualism: Basic Principles.* Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters.

Coppieters, R. 1987. Competence Differences Between Native and Near-native Speakers. *Language*, 63:3, 544-573.

Cruse, D.A 1986. *Lexical Semantics.* Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Denison, N. 1984. Language Acquisition in a Plurilingual Environment. *Grazer Linguistische Studien*, 21, 35-64.

Ellegård, A. 1977. Hur lär vi oss språk? *Moderna Språk*, LXXI: 3.

Francis W. N & Kučera H. 1983. *Frequency Analysis of English Usage.* Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Gass S. 1983. The Development of L2 Intuitions. *TESOL QUARTERLY*,17: 2

Gass, S. et al. (eds.) 1989. *Variation in Second Language Acquisition: Discourse and Pragmatics.* Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters.

Gass, S. et al. (eds) 1989. *Variation in Second Language Acquisition: Psycholinguistic Issues.* Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters.

George, H.V. 1972. *Common Errors in Language Learning.* Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House Publishers, Inc..

Halliday, M., McIntosh, A. & Strevens, P. 1970 The Users And Use of Language. in Fishman J. (ed.): *Readings in the Sociology of Language*, The Hague: Mouton & Co. N.V. Publishers.

Holmberg, A. 1986. *Word Order and Syntactic Features in the Scandinavian Languages and English.* Edsbruk: Akademitryck.

Karius, I. 1988. Aspects of Lexical Categorization. In Hüllen W.& Schultze R. (eds.) *Understanding the Lexicon.* Linguistische Arbeiten, Tübingen: Niemeyer, 344-354.

Kirschner, C. 1984. Style-shifting and the Spanish-English Bilingual. *Hispanic Linguistics*, 1:2, 273-282.

Kirschner, C. & Stephens 1987 Bilingual Theory and Attitudinal Change: The Spanish-English Bilingual and the English- Speaking L2 Student of Spanish. in Lantolf & Labarca: *Research in Second Language Learning: Focus on the Classroom*, Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation, 126-133.

Linnarud, M. 1986. *Lexis in Composition. A Performance Analysis of Swedish Learner's Written English.* Lund Studies in English, Lund: Wallin & Dalholm Boktryckeri AB.

Phillips, M. 1989. *Lexical Structure of Text.* English Language Research Birmingham: University of Birmingham Printing Section.

Ringbom, H. 1987. *The Role of the First Language in Foreign Language Learning.* Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters.

Seidl W./McMordie 1978. *English Idioms and How to Use Them.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Selinker, L. 1974. Interlanguage. in Richards, J. (ed): *Error Analysis*, London: Longman Group Ltd, 31-54.

Sornig, K. 1988. Idioms in Language Teaching. in Hüllen W.& Schultze R. (eds): *Understanding the Lexicon*, Linguistische Arbeiten, Tübingen: Niemeyer, 280-290.

Söderman, Tove 1993. Word Associations of Foreign Language Learners and Native Speakers. The Phenomenon of a Shift in Response Type and Its Relevance for Lexical Development. In H. Ringbom (ed.): *Near-native Proficiency in English*, Åbo Akademi University: English Department Publications 2, 91-182.

White, L. 1989. *Universal Grammar And Second Language Acquisition.*
Amsterdam, Benjamins.

Yorio, C. A. 1989. Idiomaticity as an Indicator of Second Language Proficiency.
in K.Hyltenstam & L. Obler (eds): *Bilingualism Across the Lifespan*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 55-72

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - the texts

A1

Her Martin

Amy opened her eyes. The sun was shining through the light curtains. "Oh, I'm glad the weather is good, because this day is going to be special," she had said to herself. Her new skirt and a blue blouse were lying on the chair. Usually she wanted to stay in bed for a while after she had woken up. Today she got up almost at once. She dressed and went to see whether her mother was awake because she wanted to ask her if the skirt and blouse matched.

The bedroom door was open. She could see just a little bit of her mother's hair under the covers. "Why is she still sleeping?", she wondered. It was only half past eight she noticed later. She was very excited, she had waited for this day for almost a week. Martin would phone today and ask her to go out to the restaurant with him. They had almost agreed on that when they talked to each other last time. But he said that something might come up at the last minute so he had better phone her again.

Now she could hear her mother walking towards the kitchen. She rushed to her.

"Darling, are you up already?" her mother said. "Yes, I couldn't sleep any longer. Do you remember that Martin is going to take me out for pizza tonight?" asked Amy. "I hope you will not be disappointed if he can't come." "I know he will come," said Amy.

They went to have some cereals for breakfast. Afterwards Amy washed up and her mother cleaned the bedrooms. The whole day Amy had the feeling that time was creeping slowly. In the evening she couldn't sit still.

"Would you like some dinner?" her mother asked. "No, thanks. I will wait for the pizza. Can I borrow some of your rouge?" "I think you don't need that. You are young and your cheeks are red enough already," said her mother. "Please." "Okay then."

Amy put on some rouge and sat down by the telephone waiting for a signal. She recalled the nice picnics Martin had taken her for, and the times they had spent cycling in the countryside. He used to call her his girl. She liked that. Amy was deep in thought when the telephone rang. It was her friend Claire. She couldn't help feeling disappointed. Claire wanted her to come and visit her but Amy told her all about the evening with Martin. "I see, have a good time," said Claire.

Amy sat down with a sigh. Half an hour later the phone rang again. "It must be him now," she shouted.

Her mother smiled to herself. She was happy that her daughter had such a good relationship with her grandfather. She needed a man in her life after her father's death.

A2

The Inspection

They say that one never forgets one's very first job. That is no doubt very true. My active years are now behind me and I have now reached the stage in my life where I tend to find myself looking back instead of forward. That is hardly surprising. Having had a most stimulating professional career and having also lived life to the full in other respects, I now have virtually nothing else to do but to remember past events. It's funny, however, that what I recall is seldom of very great importance. But passing my time thinking about odd events that have occurred gives me much more pleasure than writing my memoirs does.

I guess that what people enjoy reading about is how I reached my position in society, what or who influenced my political views or how I myself have reacted to the fame and wealth that my reforms have brought me. But those are not things that I enjoy writing about. In fact, my struggle for the emancipation of women, the liberalization of the judicial system - everything seems to be embedded in a thick grey substance, which I neither can, nor want, to penetrate. It is those small oddities in life, not the major things that one has accomplished, which engrave themselves on one's memory and that one tends to remember as if they happened only yesterday. And indeed, it is by the details, by the minutiae, that I remember my first employment.

In the mid 1920's I graduated from one of the most sophisticated universities in the country. Eager as I was to get into the "real" world after having spent far too great a portion of my life in an unnatural and tense atmosphere that did not suit my temperament very well, I applied for a job. "Anything will do", I thought. However, my feelings were slightly ambivalent when I, a couple of months later, learnt that I had got the position of headmistress at a girls' school. "Back to school again", was my first reaction. Nevertheless, the word "headmistress" had a ring which appealed to my character. I only wished that my former teachers would be the ones sitting in the classroom in my school and not young girls, who would probably feel the same kind of dislike, mixed with respect, towards me as I had felt towards my teachers not long before.

The island was large and its soil very fertile. As soon as I set foot on it I realized that it was more like a paradise on earth than the dreary, remote island with windblown trees and sharp rocks that my imagination had created. The largest village was situated on the southern shore of the island. It was full of life. The shrieks of the seagulls and the shouts of the fishermen in their boats filled the air from early in the morning until late at night. The market in the centre of the village was always crowded. The islanders were friendly people who led very down-to-earth lives and who were so different from the scholars and the tutors who had hitherto influenced such an essential part of my life.

On the other side of the island, in the middle of a pine forest, was the school. "It's not good for young girls to live isolated like this", the mistress of the household told me, while showing me the house on the day of my arrival. "But it's an honour living and working in Fanny's old mansion", she continued. That was the first time I heard about Fanny Mycroft, the former owner of that impressive mansion, which after her death about half a decade previously, had been turned into a boarding school for girls. I was told that Fanny Mycroft had been a prominent figure, not just on the island, which she regarded as her own personal property, but also on the mainland.

"A very strong woman she was", the gardener told me. "People came from all over the world to admire her estate. Her oriental cypresses, the flower beds, the walks - everything had to be in perfect condition. Weeds in the vegetable patch would make her furious and so would the cleaning women if they had been neglectful of their work; she could smell dust as soon as she entered the hall."

All my predecessors had considered it their duty to keep the gardens as well as the house in excellent condition and consequently I, too, made a great effort to maintain the good reputation of the mansion. I made it very clear to the girls that they were not to walk on the lawns, wear outdoor shoes indoors or lean against the walls which were still decorated with the same fine wallpapers as in Fanny Mycroft's days. The furniture, too, was more than half a century old. It surprised and pleased me to see that both the teachers and the pupils respected this to a very high degree. We all crept about in the rooms, as if we were in a museum and not in a school house, stepping carefully on the Persian carpets and taking care not to wear out the sofas and armchairs or to soil the velvet curtains.

Indeed, it was a grand house. The entrance consisted of a roof supported by two rows of pillars. Through a huge, heavy oak door you reached the main hall, where the girls used to sit with their knitting and embroidery, waiting for classes to begin. On the right was the library, and next to the big staircase, the dining-room, where we always had our morning assembly. Some of the older girls, whose task it was to lock the front door every evening and turn off the oil lamps in the library, had their rooms downstairs. The staff and all the other girls slept upstairs.

This was the case the evening that stands out in my memory. It had been a busy and exhausting day. As the yearly inspection of the school was going to take place the following day, I had had the girls clean the house from top to bottom - literally. All the rugs and curtains had been dusted, all the ovens in the kitchens had been scoured and the floors and the stairs had been given a good scrub.

Still, I had a feeling that there was something I had overlooked. This feeling haunted me all evening, making it difficult for me to get to sleep. Suddenly, as I was lying there under my eiderdown, contemplating whether I should get out of bed and make a final inspection of the house, I heard a knock on the front door downstairs. I remembered that the young singing-mistress, Sophie, had told me that she would be going to a dance in the village. I wasn't surprised because she always went out on Wednesdays. Not that I approved of her behaviour - in fact, I feared that it would influence the girls in a negative way - but I wanted to be on a friendly footing with all the teachers and so I let her go. If Sophie wanted to have some fun and meet people of her own age once a week, I certainly wasn't going to prevent her from doing so. This afternoon she had told me that she would be spending the night at her parents' house, as the dance wouldn't finish until late at night.

"Can't have been much fun this evening", I murmured to myself with a glance at my watch.

A few seconds later I heard somebody unlock the door, probably one of the girls whose room was downstairs. Then heavy footsteps were heard crossing the hall. They were steps of clumsy shoes or boots and the noise grew as they went up the stairs.

"How could she dream of entering the house wearing dirty shoes, when there's going to be an inspection tomorrow!", I thought.

The steps headed for the door leading to Sophie's room. They sounded like the steps of an old woman who walks with a shuffle because she is too tired to lift her feet. The door was opened and then shut with a bang; opened-shut, opened-shut. I was just about to spring out of bed and out of my room to tell Sophie to stop playing with the door, when the noise ceased. There was nothing but silence.

The following morning we were all gathered in the dining-room as ususal. Only Sophie was absent. Her oversleeping irritated me even more than her careless behaviour the previous night. I had planned to talk to her about it as soon as possible.

"Where's Sophie?", I asked, trying to sound calm. "She didn't come home last night" the girls answered me. "But one of you let her in, didn't you?", I asked of the older girls.

They looked at each other and then swore that none of them had dared to leave their room when they had heard the knock on the front door and later the heavy footsteps.

Later that day the inspector arrived. He was well known by the staff, since he had inspected the house for the last ten years. I was thus the only one he didn't know from before.

"Well, how do you enjoy your job here?", he asked me after we had shaken hands. His friendly manner made me feel relaxed and gave me the confidence to mention the strange events that had occurred during the night. He gave me a reassuring tap on the shoulder and said: "Fanny never trusts a new headmistress. Next year she probably won't find it necessary to inspect the house herself."

A3

The Unclassic Hero

A hero is usually defined as one who displays vast amounts of courage in the face of overwhelming odds. There are real, everyday heros such as firemen, and then there are the heros that one finds in plays, books, or movies. The book *Catch-22* has in it a hero, however, he is not the type of hero as described above. More precisely the character who is the hero is known as the anti-hero. The anti-hero, perhaps, outwardly does not display any of the traits of a "real hero", however, inwardly he has a lot of courage.

The anti-hero, Yossarian, is an airman for the United States Air Force during World War II. The first anti-hero trait noticed in Yossarian is his apprehension towards flying missions over enemy territory. In short, he is terrified of bombing the Germans, terrified to the point where he will do just about anything to keep from flying a mission. He moves bomb lines, fakes injuries and illness, and pleads insanity, however, all attempts are futile.

If Yossarian is the hero in the book then he certainly does not fit the definition of the hero given earlier. Yossarian displays all the characteristics of a coward. The author makes one wait until the end of the book to discover the type of courage Yossarian really has.

Every hero, living or fictional, must have something or someone to oppose, a villain. Yossarian is no exception. His villain is the United States Air Force. At the end of the book Yossarian displays courage in the face of his enemy as he makes a commitment to desert. This commitment was made though the risk is great and the rest of his life will be spent on the run. It was a decision that allowed Yossarian to submit to the voice of his conscience, and not submit to the whims of the Air Force. Besides making him betray himself the Air Force was dehumanizing him, disgracing him and threatening him. So Yossarian did the most courageous thing he could and that was to desert.

Despite the odds against him, Yossarian faced up to his enemy. He displayed the courage to stick to his beliefs even though he would face imprisonment and disgrace if caught. Yossarian is the perfect example of the anti-hero. Perhaps he lacks the outward courage but he has the inside courage that many "real" heros lack.

A4

Music After Midnight

I had nearly given up when I saw the small sign completely by accident in a dirty window with dark red curtains. "Vacant rooms, cheap", it stated.

Without great enthusiasm I looked at the old wooden house. It must have been built sometime in the 18th century and it seemed to need a great deal of work. Time had put its marks on the house; one could only imagine what colour the house had once been, and there was a funny noise coming from a broken window on the third floor caused by the wind.

Well, why not, I thought and went up the stairs. I knocked on the door once, twice... Then I heard the sound of footsteps coming towards the door. An old thin lady opened it. She gazed through her glasses at me. Her hair was gray and her face covered in a fine net of wrinkles. She wore a black dress, and a yellow, striped, long-haired cat followed her.

"I saw the sign in the window", I said. She nodded her head. I explained to the old lady that I needed a room, and asked how much she wanted for it. She told me I could get a room for £48 a month, but she wouldn't allow smoking. I told her that I didn't smoke anyway, and that I would like to see the room, but I already knew that I would take it since it was so extraordinarily cheap.

When I decided to go to univeristy in 1985, and move away from home, I had tried to get a student flat, but in vain. It's so hard to get a hold of one in these days. Then I read hundreds of advertisements in the local paper, and ran across town several times to find out that the rooms for rent were either no longer vacant or far too expensive for my modest economy.

I was very curious about what the room may look like. The old lady took me up the stairs. There was a strange smell in the house, the smell of an old house.

"I have a room for you on the third floor", the old lady told me. "Then there is old Mr. Alexandersson in room four, Miss Smith in room five, and Mr. Kowalski in room six on the second floor". We went up to a small corridor, and the old lady took a key from her pocket. She opened the door and showed me in. It was a small room but it seemed quite lovely. There was a large, old wooden bed in the middle of the room. And there was a huge wardrobe, two chairs and a table by the window. I looked at the wallpaper, which had tiny roses on it, and felt the soft carpet on the floor. There was a view of a small, wild-looking garden.

I knew that buses went downtown every fifteen minutes, and besides, it was going to be wonderful to live so near the forest. No traffic, no exhaust fumes... I didn't regret taking the room. The other guests were quite nice. In the evening we used to sit around the fireplace in the sitting room downstairs.

Miss Smith was about my age and she was studying at medical school. Most of the time she sat hidden behind her books and she didn't take part in our conversations very often.

Mr. Alexandersson was an old seaman. He had a grey beard and lively grey eyes. He used to tell us fascinating stories from his days on the seas. We listened to him with great interest when he told us about the foreign countries which he had visited.

Mr. Kowalski was Jewish. He had black hair and dark brown eyes and was middle-aged. In 1944 he had escaped from a concentration camp. Now he worked at the local library. He was a good piano player so he used to entertain us with his music in the evenings.

Our landlady made us tea and her cat used to lie close to the fireplace. My studies at the university slowly began to take more of my time, and I got used to not living at home anymore. I used to sit in my room studying literature, sometimes until two o'clock in the morning.

One evening when I had just started to write an essay I suddenly heard the sound of music. "What's that?", I thought. I stopped writing and listened. I could hear someone playing the violin. I had heard that melody before. It was by some famous composer - Mozart or Beethoven perhaps. I couldn't remember the title of the piece but I was sure that I had heard it many times before. I tried to concentrate on my essay again but that beautiful violin music made me curious. It seemed to be coming from the room next door. Finally I couldn't resist trying to find out who it was that was playing the violin. I put my pencil down and went out of my room. I went to the door next to mine - the door of room eight - and could hear the music even more clearly. I knocked on the door though it was late. The music stopped, so I opened the door and went in. An old man sat by the window holding a violin in his left hand. He had grey hair, blue eyes, curved eyebrows and a thin mouth. He looked at me.

"I heard you playing and wanted to find out who was playing so beautifully", I said. I told him that I was very interested in music and then I asked whether he would mind if I stayed for a while just to listen to him.

"No", the man said and smiled a little. He looked rather pale, as though he had recently been ill. He lifted his instrument and began to play again. He entertained me for almost an hour. When he paused I asked him what his name was. "I'm Mr. Bedlington", he said. I looked at my watch. It was nearly one o'clock. I felt rather tired and decided to return to my room. "Well, I'd better go now", I said to Mr. Bedlington.

"Thank you very much, and good night", I said as I got up from my chair and went out of his room. I closed his door gently and snuck back to my own room.

It was so late that I didn't feel like finishing my essay, so I went straight to bed instead.

The following day I got up at seven o'clock as usual. I went downstairs to the kitchen, where our landlady was making breakfast, but she rushed out in a hurry with a bunch of books in her hand. Besides she was on a diet, she said. Mr. Kowalski had had a bad night and was rather grumpy. Mr. Alexandersson told me he would be spending the day fishing at the nearby waterfall. Then I picked up my books and went out to wait for the next bus headed for downtown.

Later, after a busy day, it was rather relaxing to have tea in the sitting room. Miss Smith was reading as usual, and Mr. Kowalski and Mr. Alexandersson were having a game of chess. It was raining outside but inside it was quite warm and comfortable.

After a while I went up to my room and began to read a book. And then again I could hear music. I put on my slippers and my dressing gown, and went over to Mr. Bedlington's room. He sat on his usual chair by the window and played. Again I sat for a while listening to him play. I admired his graceful fingers as they moved over the instrument. While he played he seemed to be in another world. He took no notice of me whatsoever. His eyes seemed to look somewhere in the distance. But I had never heard anyone play so beautifully. When he stopped he looked at me. Then he turned his face to the window and looked out of it. I took this as a sign that he wanted to be alone, so again I said good night to him and slipped out to my room.

Almost every night after midnight I could hear the sound of music and usually I crept into Mr. Bedlington's room to listen to him play.

But one thing bothered me. One day at breakfast I had to ask my landlady. "Why is it that your guest in room eight never has breakfast with us or joins us in the sitting room in the evenings", I asked.

She looked at me. Then she said: "Nobody lives in room eight. Nobody has lived there since my great-grandfather, Frank Bedlington, who died of cholera in 1837. They say that he was a very good violinist."

A5

On (Not) Learning Dutch

At the beginning of this year I spent two months at a research institute in the Netherlands. Having lectured and done research on various aspects of foreign language learning, I felt that, apart from other obvious advantages of a stay at a research institute abroad, this would be an excellent opportunity to test my ideas on learning a new language. "Since I already know at least two languages, and also manage to understand (standard) German without problems, learning at least to understand Dutch shouldn't present all that many obstacles", I reasoned, somewhat naively. In this attitude I was strengthened by some very good results achieved in oral and written comprehension of Dutch by Danish and Swedish university students - the results of a project at the University of Umeå. Without any previous knowledge of Dutch, and armed with the Umeå research report, an English-Dutch parlour of useful phrases and (later) a pocket dictionary, I set about my self-imposed task of learning Dutch in two months without really trying too hard. Every morning I bought a Dutch newspaper which I then perused for more than half an hour, to keep abreast with world events. Extensive reading, as I had told my students, is clearly an excellent way of increasing one's foreign language vocabulary.

What was then the result of my efforts? Well, I learnt relatively quickly to achieve at least an approximate understanding of what I thought were the most essential pieces of news in my papers. Only at the very beginning did I make a silly mistake like spending several minutes trying to figure out what important world event I couldn't make head or tail of, until it gradually dawned on me that the text actually dealt with a cancelled rock concert. This, incidentally, led to my immediate acquisition of the dictionary. I gradually learnt to read without having to look up very many words, and by the end of my stay I thought I had acquired at least a tolerable level of reading comprehension. That some of my colleagues, including non-linguists, had reached a similar level within a short time and without ever setting foot in Holland somewhat diminished my pride in my achievement.

Successful oral communication, not only productive, but also receptive, however, remained an unattainable goal for me. The Dutch always speak exceedingly fast, I first tried to persuade myself, but had to remind myself of a fact well-known from textbooks, that it is always the non-native learner who is slow, not the native speaker who is fast. In my constant struggle to identify strange guttural sounds with the letter "g" or "sch", I knew from the written forms of words, I always seemed to lose those important fractions of seconds needed to get the general hang of the conversation.

Did such a lack of listening comprehension herald the onset of early senility? I spent considerable time trying to refute this distressing possibility. Whether I was completely successful I don't know, but I'll give you some of my arguments for what they are worth. I must admit to being happy to find some support for these ideas in actual research.

Since English, and sometimes German, was the language normally used for communication in the international atmosphere of the research institute, one obvious point, of course, is insufficient practice. This sometimes made the place far from ideal for learning the language of the country, regardless of its other advantages.

Precise identification of all speech elements is not all that easy in listening comprehension. When words are spoken in isolation they have a certain stability, but when they occur in connected speech there is a lot of variation: sounds may be omitted, vowels reduced, and it is often difficult to know where a word begins and where it ends. Languages differ in this respect: the perception of French (and, I suspect, Dutch) being notoriously difficult. To be able to understand individual words may take you a long way in reading a text, but it won't take you at all as far in oral comprehension, where you really have to develop a specific listening skill, normally attainable only through a lot of practice. The old truth that the whole is more than the sum of the individual parts applies particularly clearly to the listening skill, where time pressure is always present.

If I had problems with listening, the problems of trying to say something myself were, needless to say, immensely greater. To conduct little everyday routines in Dutch, like taking my trousers to be cleaned, was the best I could manage, and then the visit to the cleaners had been preceded by careful memorization of suitable phrases. Even so, I admit to feeling proud when I had been able to manage in a concrete situation where pointing is not enough. No ordinary conversation of even the simplest kind was possible for me: my active vocabulary was simply non-existent. I now have a better understanding of the frustration - *infantilization* is a technical word for this - felt by those students who, having gone to the Soviet Union to study other subjects, have to spend the whole of their first year learning Russian and nothing but Russian. As a teacher of advanced students it is easy to forget the enormity of the task of learning another language: if you are all the time operating with only the languages you know, or at any rate think you know, it is easy to forget how laborious the process of learning really is.

But above all, my Dutch experiences brought home to me in a very concrete way how different the demands of the four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) really are. I had, of course, *known* that before, but sometimes real knowing needs recent personal knowledge.

A6

Over the Fence: Some Impressions

This is one of the best poems by a woman poet I have ever come across. It clearly shows the difficulties in conforming to a male world and it does so with a wonderful, rebellious touch. The punctuation, which is very typical of a Dickinson poem, suggests several possible readings. The use of dashes instead of full stops makes it easier for the reader to find his/her own interpretation. I think that the dashes also make the reading of the poem more slow, more thoughtful, since a dash indicates a longer pause than, for example, a colon. Dickinson here displays marvellous control of thought and the thoughts are separated by dashes. This gives them a different emphasis and makes them easier to absorb.

In the first stanza, the opening line makes it clear that there is some kind of division, there is a fence. The girl in the poem is standing on one side of the fence and the berries are growing on the other. The girl likes strawberries and she knows that she could climb the fence if she tried. But - she cannot climb or isn't allowed to - because she is a girl. A girl is not supposed to climb fences, she could stain her apron! Here I see the fence as a kind of border. It is the border between a man's and a woman's world. The strawberries represent the male world, things that this girl would like to do or would like to have. She knows perfectly well that she could be a part of that world, but for the fences that are stopping her. The fence is to me a symbol for taking the step into the male world on her own terms and not on theirs. Perhaps this also works the other way, does it (i.e "the fence") keep men from taking part in the female world?

Interestingly enough, the girl is not afraid that her mother would scold her, but she says that "God would certainly scold". Why should God scold? I think it is a clear indication that God, who is thought of as being male, would not like her, or women in general, to stand up against His order of creation. In the different churches throughout the ages, women have been regarded as inferior. She was not allowed, for instance, to speak in church, because if she did, she would embarrass her husband. A woman taking an active part in church or in society would have been regarded as a "shrew" and her "poor husband" would be laughed at. Of course a God who has created and supports such a social order would be displeased with such a revolt.

The last two lines of the poem are wonderful. I think that by saying: "I guess if I were a Boy - ", Dickinson questions both the picture of God as being male and the superiority that is thought to lie in the male sex. The picture of God as a father is common and generally accepted. If she here is questioning the Father role she is very daring. It is not until recently we have heard the expression "God is mother too" and this is certainly not generally accepted - yet. I think that it is rather the superiority of men that Dickinson is after. She writes, "He'd climb - if He could - ". This indicates that a man is not necessarily able to do what is considered to be masculine. This thought brings the poem onto a totally different level - the real differences are not between the sexes, but between individuals. Just because I'm a woman, I'm not necessarily a good cook, and just because a person is a man, he is not automatically a good driver, for example. The only thing we are born with that separates men and women is our sex with its genetic consequences - and that has very little to do with our abilities later on in life.

The way Dickinson distinguishes between the sexes is quite interesting. In the second stanza, she uses the word "Apron" with a capital letter. The apron is, or at least used to be, a typically feminine attribute. The thought of a man wearing an apron was ridiculous, and something of this can still be found in, for example, comic strips today. She also uses a capital letter in "He" when referring to God, but this is in accordance to standard typography and is therefore not so important at this point. But Dickinson uses a capital "B" in "Boy", which amuses me. Is the Boy an equal to God? She refers to "He" and "Boy" within the same line. By doing so is she referring to boys (or men) as God(s), and to women as aprons? I think that it is at this point that the perspective of time can give us a clue. Emily Dickinson lived from 1830 to 1886. Particularly during the late 1800's and early 1900's it was men who had "the power and the glory". They had many possibilities; they could go places, they held high appointments, they made the important decisions, in short - they were almighty. Behind these men were the aprons, i.e. the women. The "Aprons" served dinner, wiped the faces of the children and the worried foreheads of their husbands. And at night the aprons were taken off in order to willingly provide the husband with yet another service - if he so wished...

Although this poem was written last century, the subject is still very current. I agree that a lot of the differences between men and women seem to have diminished, at least on the surface. But deep down we still have a long way to go. I still feel that I am limited as a woman in what I do or say. I still feel that a woman's body is regarded as being made for men's pleasure and service - this on their conditions - and perhaps not so much for her own ambitions and wishes. Today it is possible for a woman to take part in the male world but not on her own terms. It is still men who set the "rules". As a woman I feel limited, trapped in my own sex and perhaps that is the way Emily Dickinson felt when she wrote this poem. With her poem she rebels against the idea of men being superior, and she does so with the finest humour and touch of irony.

A7

The Populist Movement

Refering to the American agrarian movement of the nineteenth century, a historian has written that its "...episodic character,...its periodic outbursts, its constant shifting from economic organization to partisan political action, revealed weakness rather than strength." This interpretation is misleading in that it tries to evaluate the "strength" of an economic and political reform movement purely on the basis of whether it achieved its stated goals. While this may be an adequate definition of "success," the strength of a movement should be assessed with further regard to the size and dedication of its following as well as the forces opposing its efforts. This definition leads to a quite different evaluation of the agrarian movement.

Contrary to the above quote, the strength of the Populist movement derived directly from its use of both economic and political action. Not only did each stream of activity reinforce and serve as a basis for the other, but in post-Civil War America, either stream, pursued alone, was doomed to failure. The movement's "periodic outbursts" actually served to strengthen the farmers' resolve both by clarifying their needs and by identifying their opponents. In addition, the phrase "revealed weakness" implies that the movement's failure was at least partially caused by its "episodic character." Such a stance ignores the high level of influence and success which the original movement - uncorrupted by fusionists or free silver doctrine - achieved. The agricultural movement's true weakness (if one must be found) was its failure to attract black farmers and urban laborers as successfully as it did white farmers.

The political climate in the United States in the post-Civil War period was one of "bloody-shirt" platforms, featuring intense appeals to sectional, party, and racial loyalties. In the old "Solid South," Democrats appealed to farmers to support the "party of the fathers" and declared the Populists enemies of white supremacy. In the North and West, Republicans appealed to farmers to support the recently victorious "good old party" and declared the Populists Southern rebels in league with the Democrats! Organizations such as the Grange which had tried to overcome these sectional loyalties had a history of failure.

The ability of the Populists to form a third political party under these conditions is a direct result of the Alliance's economic groundwork. The economic successes of the Alliance gave farmers the collective self-confidence and economic education they needed in order to abandon old sectional loyalties. The lecture circuit and reformed press provided the necessary communication network for the People's Party. In short, the hope for an improved life which the Alliance had brought to thousands of farmers in the 1880's transferred into the Populist movement in 1892.

The agrarian political movement, like its above-mentioned economic movement, could not succeed when implemented alone. This is clearly demonstrated by Populist defeats in areas where a strong Farmers Alliance never existed: Minnesota, Nebraska, Iowa, the Old northwest, and the Old Dominion (Virginia). In Minnesota, "... farmers did not undertake to form a purchasing or marketing cooperative, at either the state or local level."(p. 106) In Nebraska, farmers had "...no understanding of the cooperative crusade of the Alliance or of the greenback doctrines that the cooperative struggle had raised to preeminence in the agrarian movement."(p. 129)

The agrarian movement was punctuated by "periodic outbursts" of economic and political activity. These outbursts included initial organizing attempts, the drive to establish cooperatives, political campaigns, and a series of "Demands" and "Platforms." Although the movement did suffer some losss and intrnal divisions, these outbursts nevertheless aided in the enlightenment and education of the farmers. in addition, any successes had immense psychological importance in both encouraging present members and attracting new ones.

Possibly the most significant cause/result of these outbursts in terms of strengthening the movement was the already discussed increse in self-respect and economic education among farmers. After the failure of the Southern Exchange in 1889 and many other co-ops between 1890 and 1893, farmers were clearly aware of the commercial forces of banking, merchants, and railroads working against them. The Chicago Livestock Commission's refusal to recognize a multi-state livestock marketing cooperative and the attempts of Dothan, Alabama merchants to tax a cooperative warehouse are exemplary of conflicts which confirmed the hostility of business to Populism. The failure of the Grand State Farmers Alliance in 1880 gave an early lesson in the strength of sectionalism and the old Democratic Party. Internal divisions at the Cleburne conference of 1886, on the other hand, helped force a complete split with the Democrats over the issue of greenbacks. The crisis began when Alliance conservatives, not wanting to break with the sound-money Democrats, threatened to split with Alliance radicals if a soft-currency, greenback policy was adopted. It ended when Charles Macune succeeded in both mollifying the conservative and retaing the radical monetary plank. In this case, as in other Populist political outbursts, the movement survived - more self-confident, more determined, and with clarified goals. The successful weathering of such crises seems to show strength and resiliency rather than "weakness."

In the years 1895 and 1896, the People's Party became infiltrated by large numbers of Populist fusionists and "free-silver" Democrats who wanted to unite the two parties in a campaign for "the free and unlimited coinage of silver." A return to silver monetization was favored by Western mining interests and appeared to worried Democrats as the only issue which could defeat the "gold-bug" Republicans in the coming elections. The doctrine of free silver was anathema to most Populists since it required the jettisoning of the Omaha Platform of 1892 with its greenback and banking reform planks. Nevertheless, the fusionists, well-financed by silver interests, controlled much of the party leadership and succeeded in nominating William Jennings Bryan (the Democratic presidential candidate) as the Populist candidate for president. This event effectively destroyed the Populist movement.

The downfall of Populism, therefore, came primarily from outside influences, not from some major internal "weakness." An interpretation of the Populist movement as being weak simply because it eventually collapsed fails to recognize the real political strength which Populism attained through much of the South and West. Any weakness which the agrarian movement did have was revealed not by its "episodic character," but by its inability to appeal to large numbers of black farmers and urban laborers.

The image of the American agrarian movement which emerges from Lawrence Goodwyn's *The Populist Movement* is one of a powerful democratic initiative. The combined use of economic and political action to attack the virtually insurmountable obstacles which barred the nineteenth century farmer's road to a better life demonstrates the strength and determination of the movement. This strength and determination found expression in periodic outbursts of vigorous reform activity as the movement grew from a small self-help organization to a national political party. Not until it was corrupted by the ideologically unacceptable proponents of fusion and free silver did the movement collapse. Had the movement survived, however, it would still have been limited by its one great weakness: its inability to broaden its base. As a purely agrarian movement in a society where farmers were becoming a minority, the People's Party might never have achieved national power on its own. Consequently, the collapse of the Populist movement, which had identified the needs of a nation's farmers, opened the way for the incorporation of America's farmers into the two-party system.

A8

Scottish Window

There are naturally a lot of things to write about as far as Scotland is concerned Personally I have had a passion for this country, and especially a certain Scotsman, for several years, and there are few things that I don't find interesting, fascinating, strange, amusing or different and that I couldn't write about. I have, however, chosen to narrow it down to two subjects quite close to me in my daily life in this part of the world. I might even add a few lines about Scottish food at the end, but this window is going to be about music and football.

In November, two twins from Edinburgh hit the pop charts with their rather controversial song "Letters from America". The Proclaimers, as this group is called, claim to be Scottish Nationalists and they sing in broadest possible Scots. "Letters from America" combines the old theme of the Highland Clearances with the industrial decline of present Scotland and the lyrics mention Skye and the Highlands, Methil on the coast of Fife and other industrialized areas of Scotland, contrasting the old theme with the modern, political message.

The Highland Clearances occurred in the 18th and the 19th centuries when crofters were removed from the land in the Highlands and Islands to make room for sheep and deer, more profitable for the landowners than the farming community. The crofters were shipped, by the thousand, to America, Canada and Australia or put on the train to Glasgow where they formed the poorest of the working class. These unhappy events have caught the imagination of many songwriters, poets and novelists. There are also many studies on the subject.

In "Letters from America" this past is linked with the present decline in Scottish mining, shipbuilding and textile works. Many are again forced to leave Scotland for the prosperous south or even to seek their fortune outside Britain. Scotland's newest industry is the manufacture of high-technology, but these few and highly automated factories cannot employ everybody. Even the previously prosperous north-east is suffering a decline in the oil-boom of the early eighties.

The Proclaimers' song has a very clear political message and it was a new and very different tune on the otherwise almost completely English or American pop-scene. The song did not, however, reach the important Christmas No 1 in the charts. After a very successful start it fell suddenly and it was Scottish history repeating itself once again. Not even this battle over the English could be won...

Another important battle with England is fought on the football pitch, and football in general is an unavoidable part of Scottish life. Almost every Scottish town has its own team and the major cities even have two each. Dunfermline Athletic Football Club (DAFC) is the team of the town in Fife where I live. This year the team has joined the prestigious Premier League and it is now struggling to stay up. The prediction is that it will drop to the First Division again but the struggle has involved the signing of new players, improvements at the football ground and a high interest among the citizens of this town in Fife. Unfortunately the game is rather uneven, with losses against poorer teams and good fights against the very best. The fans follow their team through rain and snow and even I, usually not very interested in football, find myself at both home and away games, jumping and shouting when they play badly. I even got the club's scarf in black, red and white last Christmas.

I enjoy the atmosphere at football games and sometimes I even watch the crowd more than I watch the game. As a language student among the football crowd, I cannot help noticing that it supplies material for studies of the vernacular and sometimes I am almost embarrassed on behalf of the players and the referee. The abuse cannot possibly pass unnoticed.

Violence at football grounds has been widely debated and discussed. The security measures are strongly enforced, and the fans are segregated, both inside the football ground and when leaving it. Saturday games between teams with large support are usually all-ticket affairs and fans are discouraged from travelling without having secured a ticket in advance. Violence in connection with football is something which the Scottish treat with utmost sincerity and all Premier League grounds have had to invest in close-circuit television, among other things.

After 90 minutes outside, in the cold January air or a biting November wind, it is nice to come home to a big, steaming plate of "stovies". This is a dish of potatoes cooked with onions, stock (perhaps some left-over mince) and spices and it is served with crusty bread. You can get stovies in pubs or at bowling or golf clubs and sometimes at the student refectory in Edinburgh. I don't know if stovies is as typically Scottish as haggis, but it is lovely!

A9

Leningrad - From a Student's Point of View

When I got off the train at the station in Leningrad, I stepped right into the busy city life. Travellers were running to and fro carrying bags and cases. Pigeons fluttered their wings and cooed. A young man stood holding a bunch of pinks, looking for someone in the crowd. The air was filled with tobacco smoke, the particular brand called mahorka, and I inhaled the smell of fermented cabbage, sweaty t-shirts and leather sandals. A wild Alsatian with a muzzle was tied to the wall. It was struggling to get away. Every time it jumped forward a cloud of dust rose from the asphalt. Two small girls were eating ice-cream while their mother nervously brushed her hair and put on some more lipstick. The heat was exhausting - I set down my suitcase to have a rest.

I had visited Leningrad two times before but I had only stayed for a couple of days. This time I had a scholarship and was going to spend two months studying Russian at a summer course held at the engineering department of Leningrad University.

Five Russian students met us at the railway station. They were all slim and wore cotton trousers and t-shirts with pictures on them. Their hair was cut short and all but one had dark hair and brown eyes. Laughing at our suitcases, they helped us carry the luggage to a waiting bus. The summer was unusually warm and this day was no different. We arrived at the dormitory all sweaty and tired to find out that the showers did not work and that it would take a couple of days to get them fixed. I decided that this was not going to depress me so I started to unpack and make friends with my three room-mates.

Our room was of medium size, big enough for four beds, a cupboard and a small table. The floor was brown and the walls were painted light green. This did not, however, take away the shabbiness; there were still cracks and stains of damp on the walls. Most of the other girls cleaned their entire rooms - ceiling, walls and everything - before moving in. They sprayed disinfectants all over, trying to get rid of cockroaches and bugs. We decided that we rather would have insects than all those chemicals in our room. Consequently, it didn't take many hours before I saw my life's first cockroach.

We were lucky to have a dormitory which was in the centre of the town and our lessons were held right there. We worked in groups of seven, each group had a teacher of its own. Every day we spent four hours in class - discussing, reading and doing phonetics. We read newspapers, novels and history books. By learning poems by heart we studied phonetics. This was a new method for me, but I enjoyed it tremendously. I especially loved Anna Akhmatova's poems; they all had a rhythm of their own which made them easy to learn.

In the afternoons we visited museums, exhibitions and cathedrals, mostly in the centre of Leningrad but also in the surroundings. This particular part of the schedule proved to be especially well-planned. After two months we had seen all tourist attractions you can possibly think of. We went to the Hermitage, the Russian Museum, the Kunstkamera, the Ethnological Museum and the Zoological Museum, to name a few. We also visited Petrodvorech, the tsar's summer residence; Pavlovsk, where Paul I lived; and Pushkin, where among others Catharine the Great had her residence. All these places were on the outskirts of Leningrad, surrounded by beautiful parks. Especially the park at Petrodvorech astonished me. There must have been a hundred different fountains, all shaped differently. I saw statues of men and women, fish, vases, trees and flowers - all spreading rainbow coloured water drops. The palaces were enormous and luxurious inside. The parquet floorings were artistic, the ceilings painted in light colours often gold included, and the walls were covered with hand-made wallpaper. It was hard to believe that people had actually lived in these palaces. They were architectual masterpieces - too perfect, too beautiful to be worn by children's play or continuous cleaning. As we slided over the floors in our soft woollen slippers, not touching anything, I often felt that coughing would be enough to insult the walls. It is impossible to think of these places with anything else than admiration.

The weather was wonderful throughout the whole month of July. I decided to take advantage of this and spend as much time as possible exploring different parts of the town. During daytime the centre was not a pleasant place to be in. The asphalt was literally melting under my feet and the queues to the water machines were several hundred meters long. As a foreigner, I could go into a hotel and have an ice-cold drink in the bar. I couldn't help feeling a little guilty, though, every time I sat there with my Coke. Russians were not allowed in bars and shops where you could pay in foreign currencies. The doorman checked all guests, if he thought somebody looked suspicious, that is Russian, he asked for identification. I never got used to this unfairness. I felt terrible every time one of our Russian friends was left outside. They deserved refreshments as much as we, after all - it was their country.

In the evening when the temperature had dropped a little, we felt alive again. The city was more beautiful than ever. It was the time of the so called "white nights", when the town glitters in a special way, and it is so light that I did not want to go to sleep at all. We went on cruises on the River Neva. From the river we could get a much better view; we noticed how graceful the buildings were and how rich with ornaments. Most houses were three or four stories high and painted in light blue, green or yellow. The walls were decorated with reliefs or statues, some houses had golden roofs and spires that reflected the evening sun. These houses must have been even more amazing at the time when St. Petersburg was the only town in the whole of Russia where stone houses were allowed. After the cruises we walked along the river. The river banks were filled with people - old grannies on benches knitting or reading, youngsters playing the guitar or listening to tape recorders - everyone was there, it seemed. If we were awake long enough we would see the bridges being raised to give large ships entrance to the town. There was something magic about the silhouettes of the bridges against the yellow night sky. I always had a feeling I was watching it for the last time.

I had heard of Afghanistan at least a hundred times before. It had been a constant topic on TV and in the newspapers for a couple of years. In spite of this I had not fully realized the seriousness of this war until I met a boy who had been in Afghanistan himself. He had gone with his twin brother but had returned home without him. His brother had died before his eyes, but he could not do a thing to help him. He was a rather thin boy with dark, blue eyes that did not see me although they looked right at me. His lips were pale and as he got more and more in the grasp of his memories, they started to tremble. He talked of nothing but the war, said the same things over and over again as though he could not believe them to be true. This was no TV-screen, it was a human being who would have to live with this for the rest of his life.

The Russians read whenever they have a chance. They read on buses, on trains, while waiting at the bus-stop or standing in a queue. They love to discuss books they have read or plays they have seen; they take an interest in all cultural events. What other nationality would queue for several hours, many parents carrying babies, to get into the Hermitage?

In our classes we had several lectures on "Perestroika" and "Glasnost". The lecturer talked about how these processes would reform the whole society. All areas would be included, nothing was going to be left out. The results could already be seen in the newspapers, schools and theatres, he said. The intellectuals had greater freedom now. Historians, for example, were allowed to write about historical events which were not even mentioned in the past. We did not, however, see much of these changes. We lived our lives as most people; we worked, went shopping and visited the restaurants every now and then. The shops still had empty shelves and the restaurants were as corrupt as ever. Usually we had to bribe waiters to get a good table and some champagne. The shops had basic products such as bread, butter, cheese, tea, eggs and canned goods. We seldom saw raw meat, coffee was not for sale and sugar was rationed. Still, some people firmly believed in "Perestroika". Others did not. They were convinced that the whole thing was a plot made up to deceive the rest of the world.

There is, no doubt, room for reforms. I firmly hope that they will work out so that greater freedom and a higher standard of living can be achieved. Perhaps this would take away the bitterness and dissatisfaction that lurk everywhere. But I also hope that this will not change the fundamental values of the people. It would be sad to return after a couple of years and find out that the culture loving Russians have turned into persistent consumers and wealth seekers. During these eight weeks I also learned not to take everything for granted. I realized that my life did not after all depend on the washing machine or dish washer. Life went on even if there was not room for me on the bus and I had to take the next one. I did not lose my temper as quickly as before. Thus, I recovered my ability to be glad about small things and my life in general. This stay made me look at the world from a different angle. I want to know more about the Russian way of thinking. I will return soon.

A10

Au Pairing in France

It is five o'clock and time for Aude's milk. As soon as I reach for the bottle Aude sees it and starts to scream impatiently. It is at that moment that Anne-Lise, Gael and Josée throw open the kitchen door, chasing each other and yelling like crazy. - I wish my two months were over and I could go home...

Most au pairers are 17 or 18, just out of high school, and ready to do something totally different - go to the country of their dreams and just let go. But when I went to France as an au pair I was 22 and already a third-year student at the university. By then I had gotten used to living on my own and caring about myself only, without having to adjust to anyone else. Learning to function as a maid was not the answer to my dreams, but I had to get some language practice and au pairing was a cheap and efficient way to learn French quickly.

So I got hold of some addresses of organisations arranging families for au pairers and a few weeks after I had sent my introductory letter I was put up with Mme et M. Guehennec in Merlevenez, Bretagne in the west of France, right by the Atlantic ocean. I was told that the family had four children aged 10, 8, 4, and 1, and that they lived by the sea. The thought of having to baby-sit for four French children really put me off at first, but when I imagined myself strolling along the sea-shore unde a blue sky and a bright sun I decided to go for it - despite the predictions of rain from just about all of my friends.

I arrived on a Saturday evening at around eight and just in time for dinner. Maman, papa, and Gael picked me up at the train station, and driving back to their house in a Renault 16, I had already formed an opinion about them. Papa Guehennac immediately made me think of "Gaston" - the French comic strip figure - tall and skinny with distinctive ears, and Maman Guehennec always repeating - at least twice - everything that her husband said was short, middle-sized, and with her all admiring eyes turned towards her husband. Finally there was Gael; an eight-year-old boy who seemed quiet and shy - but boy, was I wrong.

When we arrived at the house, the second in a row of exact replicas of French middle-class houses - white tiles, black roof, and light brown door and shutters - I came crushing back to reality from my dreamland by the sea; the only water was in the children's pool in the back garden - not exactly the ocean. My casual remark about not being able to see the ocean only aroused laughter around the dinner table and a sarcastic reply from the father, who was not at all surprised since Merlevenez is situated about 20 kilometers from the water. So much for morning strolls...

Dinner dragged on until after midnight but my attention, and my knowledge of the French language gave up on me at around 10 so from then on my participation with the living world was restricted to just letting visual images enter my head. The bare lightbulb dangling from the ceiling and throwing light over us all made me take a look at the rest of the party. Next to me was grandma, a roundish happy old lady, and beside her was grandpa, the typical French farmer, somewhat stout with red cheeks from working outdoors and enjoying too much wine. Anne-Lise, 4, very pretty with goldilocks hair slipped away unnoticed and fell asleep on the sofa, and Josée, 10, also very pretty with long and thick hair only a shade darker, did her best to participate in the big-folks' conversation.

Then at last, and several glasses of wine later, it was time for bed. Going to my room I felt the cold stone floor under my feet and threw a longing look at the Persian rug under the living-room table. A beautiful wooden staircase led up to the bedrooms on the second floor. My room was to the left and consisted only of a large bed, a chair in one corner acting as a bedside table, and an ugly plastic cabinet for my clothes at the end of the bed. I remember the soft carpet under my feet as I walked up to the window to breath some country-air. It was pitch-dark and the light in my room attracted night bugs of all kinds, but I did not mind - I was in France and it felt good. I felt relaxed and excited at the same time, relaxed because I instinctively liked the family, and excited when I thought of all the new things I was going to experience and the French I was going to learn. I could hardly wait for tomorrow to come - and I could hardly keep my eyes open but fell asleep right away.

The next morning I heard noices downstairs before 8 o'clock and resisted the temptations to ignore them. With a cheerful "bonjour!" I came down and was told to help myself to some breakfast. I was somewhat taken aback when I was offered cocoa and chocolate cookies. Another French habit I would learn to get used to - even if I did not like it.

Papa Guehennec had already left for the family store where he was the combined butcher and baker, maman Guehennec was about to leave, she was the book-keeper and all-around boss at the store, and I was just finishing my lukewarm cocoa when Aude made her first appearance in my life by waking up and wanting her morning milk. She was - and still is - the sweetest child I have ever seen. With her slightly moist, tousled hair, and still sleepy eyes, she lay in her bed giggling happily - and she just carried me away. I had to lift her up and she snuggled so close to me that I decided then and there that as soon as I got home I would start making babies - just like her.

Aude was a very quiet baby, the only times she ever cried was when she was tired or hungry and she was always easily pleased. If I only gave her her milk at regular hours, at 9 a.m. at 4.30 p.m. and at 7.30 p.m. fed her at noon, and put her to bed for her nap in the early afternoon, she was the happiest girl alive. If only the others had been as easy to please. Gael was a real trouble-maker, pushing my patience and nerves to the limit at least once a day, and since Anne-Lise did her best to imitate her big brother, she and I had our rows, too. One of the first new phrases I learned in France was actually "sinon, c'est le martinet!" - something like "if not, I'll spank you good!" - and although it was in frequent use verbally I never had the heart to actually spank the little things - besides the parents did have the heart to. In France parents go around hitting their children as if that were their excercise for the day.

The kids were in school most of the day, though, which gave me peace and quiet until 5 o'clock, and time to do my other chores. How I appreciated those hours of just me and Aude. Especially on those mornings when I had to pull Gael out of bed and half throw him out of the house in order to make him go to school, and when nothing suited Anne-Lise and I ended up changing her outfit three times - the relief when they were gone! After struggling with stubborn children, the rest was a piece of cake. Doing the housework was not fun but I did my chores quickly and at least I had something to do during some of the dead hours. I was in charge of vacuuming the house and sweeping the kitchen tiles once a week, I also took care of the washing and the ironing, and the cleaning up after the food-orgies of the weekend.

The French may not eat much for breakfast, and they may eat only left-overs for dinner - usually as late as 8 or 9 at which time I was usually so hungry that anything and everything tasted good - but in this family lunch was the high-light of the day. A full course meal with hors d'œuvres, often followed by a steak with French fries and vegetables, cheese with freshly baked bread, wine, and dessert. Of course we had the occasional left-over lunch, too, but more often than not lunch was delicious. And weekday lunches were nothing compared to the true Astérix-orgies we had during the weekends; either with guests "chez Guehennec" or as the guests at somebody else's house. It was an amazing experience; I remember one time when we started eating at 2 p.m and finished at 10 p.m almost without stopping. First we had some chips and nuts with a glass of kir before we settled down at the table. We often had a quiche, filled with fish, and white wine, before going on to red wine, Bordeaux, Burgundy, or Côtes du Rhone, to drink with the many kinds of sausages and bread. All this time we were only working up an appetite for the main course, almost always French fries with a steak of some sort and some cooked vegetables. After savouring many glasses of wine and helping ourselves to some more meat and fries it was time for the green salad. And then the cheese: Brie, Camembert, fromage du chevres, and Roquefort.

Eating in France is more than satisfying a hunger; eating is enjoying and "chez les Guehennec" it was considered to be one of the best ways to pass the time. When you eat you talk and tell jokes, something M. Guehennec mastered to perfection - he could talk for hours about politics, religion, travel, the past or the future - and when he did, people listened. One of his favourite topics was the

French government: according to him France was run by a bunch of incompetent and incapable idiots who would never succeed in pulling France up on her feet, making her a prosperous economy again. Another steaming topic was religion, which he would discuss - to tears - even with his 10-year-old daughter. The tears would be in the eyes of Josée when M. Guehennec sarcastically laughed at her innocent and naive convictions about the Bible and God. And all the time Mme Guehennec nodded approvingly and repeated the admirable thoughts and ideals just expressed by her husband.

There was never any hurry to finish up and one usually ended up eating some more instead of stopping. The meal always finished with a dessert, usually ice-cream, and then coffee with some home-made pastry or cookies. And by the time the coffee was drunk and we had stretched our legs in the garden a few minutes M. Guehennec had already decided it would be nice to barbecue some marguez, spicy sausages... Only in France.

Thinking back now most of my memories are of eating but I also remember the beach where I spent most of my spare days. I had one day off a week and then I wanted to be as far away from the kids as possible so I borrowed the family bike and did the 20 kms in no time. After a whole day in the sun - hah! to all those who thought Bretagne was rainy: it never rained when I was there - I was ready to return to my maiding again. It did become rather monotonous in the end, probably because Merlevenez is such a small town, only 2000 inhabitants, a church, a post-office, a restaurant, and a few food stores. I did not have anything to do except play with the kids, suntan, and eat. Two months of that is enough - even if it is all in French.

All in all I spent two very educational months in France. I learned to appreciate the French culture, the French themselves with their patriotism, and perhaps most of all, the language. Before I left home I was worried that my French would not be good enough but as soon as I had come to France I realized I had come at just the right time. After my third year of studying French I had reached the level where I was ready - and mature enough - for efficient language learning. And I did learn. I learned all the common words I would never find in Mauriac, Maupassant, or Zola, and I learned to use my vocabulary. On the plane back home I gladly entered into conversations with my fellow passengers - "en francais!"

(The B texts can be found in my unpublished M.A. thesis, otherwise practically identical with the present study, Åbo Akademi University 1992. See editor's preface.)

APPENDIX B - the questionnaire

Questionnaire

Text number:

This text was clearly written by a native speaker ☐

This text might possibly have been written by a non-native speaker, but most probably by a native speaker ☐

This text might possibly have been written by a native speaker, but most probably by a non-native speaker ☐

This text was clearly written by a non-native speaker ☐

If you think the text was written by a non-native speaker, please try to specify your reasons.

Lexical inadequacy
Syntactic constructions
Conceptual confusion
Rhetorical ineptitude
Mixing of norms (e.g British-American)
Other reasons

If you think the text was written by a native speaker, please try to explain why:

Håkan Ringbom

Near-nativeness and the Four Language Skills: Some Concluding Remarks

The contributions by Miemois, Söderman and Waller have approached the problem of near-nativeness from three different points of view. They are pilot studies in a little investigated area, which deserves more extensive analysis.[1]

As a conclusion, it may be worth while trying to adopt a wider perspective and briefly look at near-nativeness as it appears in the four different skills of reading, listening, speaking and writing, and then return to a renewed discussion of how near-nativeness might be defined.

Reading seems to be the skill where fully native-like competence can most easily be attained by a NNS. A comparison between native and near-native readers will, of course, have to consider the great variation in reading ability existing among native speakers. Native speakers may be good or poor readers largely depending on the actual practice in reading they have had. In simplified terms, we become good readers when we have been able to automatize our word-, sentence and text handling processes, which can normally be achieved only through extensive practice during a long period of education.

Near-native speakers are generally good readers in their L1, and substantial L2-reading is usually part of their professional requirements. This means that they have an extensive knowledge of L2-vocabulary as well as a general reading skill, which are both basic requirements for good L2-reading ability. In fact, the general reading skill acquired in one's L1 may be assumed to transfer to L2 if, and only if, it is accompanied by a threshold level of good L2-proficiency, which would include an extensive lexical L2-knowledge.

Such extensive lexical knowledge is of considerably less use to the NNS in listening comprehension than in reading comprehension (cf. e.g. Koster 1987 and Reves & Levine 1988). When it comes to understanding spoken language the NNS is in a position wholly different from that of a NS. No extensive investigation will be needed to establish the evident fact that NSs can understand other varieties of the language much better than NNSs can. The reasons are fairly obvious.

NSs have acquired their language in a spoken environment, whereas NNSs have not had the same wide experience and will have learnt much of their L2 from books. They have been exposed to much less of and to fewer varieties of spoken L2 than NSs and consequently the regional and social variation of spoken English will baffle them much more. Also, the general instability of spoken language compared with written language will have the same effect. While both written words and words spoken in isolation are relatively stable, there is considerable variation in words pronounced in connected speech: sounds may, for example, be pronounced differently or omitted, cardinal vowels reduced and the borderline between words will frequently be blurred to a non-native speaker confronted with a variety of English he is not used to. He may frequently be at a loss when deciding where a word ends and another one begins.

When it comes to speaking, near-native speakers may sometimes pass as natives, at least if they have a sufficiently good mastery of the (secondary) motor-perceptual skills of pronunciation and intonation. Their linguistic skills proper (grammar, vocabulary, discourse) may be adequate enough for them to be native-like when dealing with recurring topics of conversation at, say, cocktail parties. In such situations NNSs may occasionally receive comments from NSs like 'I thought English was your mother tongue'. Often, however, the same speaker may follow this up with another intended compliment, 'You speak much better English than we do', which, in fact, should be interpreted as 'You speak differently from us', and indicates that the NNS's hypercorrectness distinguishes him from NSs. Such hypercorrectness is no doubt a frequent characteristic of near-native speech. What exactly it consists of is not quite clear, but it may be assumed that the NNS at least has an exaggerated distinctness in pronunciation and that he makes use of words and expressions which belong more naturally to written language than to spoken language.

When, however, the communicative situation becomes more demanding, and the conversation moves to areas which the NNS does not know much about, it will be much more difficult for him to sound native-like. In particular,we may think of situations where one or more of the following conditions prevail (some of them overlapping):

- under stress and time pressure
- when the NNS's pragmatic knowledge is insufficient
- when performing cognitively highly demanding tasks
- where affective and sociocultural meanings are in the foreground
- where high language creativity is required (e.g. humour, language-based games)

In such situations, the NNS's language mastery is much less likely to be near-perfect: language infelicities and reduced flyency, even language breakdowns will occur. Undoubtedly they will to some extent occur even in NSs, but the infelicities by NNSs may well differ not only quantitatively but also qualitatively from those committed by NSs in similar situations.

Native speakers have to learn the skill of writing in a classroom setting, and the problems they face largely stem from insufficient mastery of the written code, especially the relation between spoken and written language. To communicate coherently in monologue form with somebody who is absent and does not react to what the writer is saying requires some special qualities as well as practice, even in one's L1.Native speakers vary enormously in their ability to cope with the special demands on clarity, linguistic accuracy and organizational skill inherent in any writing situation.

To NNSs, on the other hand, it is primarily not the writing situation that causes problems. In a classroom situation, foreign language learners normally learn to read and write almost as soon as they learn to listen and speak. This means that their language difficulties on the whole relate to production in general, whether in a written or in an oral mode.

Many foreign language learners are able to write very well in their L1. Whether good L1-writing ability can be transferred to an L2 will largely depend upon the writer having reached a threshold proficiency in L2 entailing at least a varied and extensive lexical knowledge and the ability to write L2-texts without obvious grammatical or lexical errors. This is a stage many advanced learners, like Scandinavian university students of English at the end of their studies, have reached, but it is not in itself sufficient for them to be able to write native-like texts. Among those who have reached this threshold level, a very few writers may be competent enough to produce near-native, perhaps even native-like, texts. But they will be able to write at this high level only in a few registers they are familiar with.

Scandinavian university teachers of English who are asked to write an account of a sermon, a cricket commentary, or a pub conversation among dock labourers will not sound convincing. They may, of course, not sound convincing if asked to write about these topics in their L1 either, but then they still have at their disposal a wider knowledge and a larger variety of strategies. L1-writers will certainly have problems in writing about situations they are not very familiar with, as journalists frequently have to do, but they can draw upon a wide variety of linguistic and pragmatic resources to cover their pragmatic gaps. The narrowness of range in which NNSs are able to write well in L2 is closely bound up with their gaps in pragmatic knowledge. The problems posed by the conditions listed above for speaking also apply to a writing situation, even though the pressure of time is generally absent in writing.

At times, then, some of the NNS's numerous pragmatic gaps will be linguistically manifested. It is certainly true that, in theory at least, you can fill a large number of gaps by observing native speakers and learning from them. Yet this does not mean that you have succeeded in learning to produce native-like language, and it is here that the distinction between declarative and procedural knowledge will be relevant (see e.g. Faerch & Kasper 1987, cf. also Ringbom 1987:24 ff.).

Declarative knowledge ('knowledge that') means the underlying knowledge (lexical, grammatical, pragmatic, interactional) a person has, while procedural knowledge ('knowledge how') refers to the knowledge how to use these linguistic and other rules and elements. Other linguistic dichotomies have been made on very similar grounds: langue - parole, competence - performance, language - language use, CALP (cognitive academic language proficiency) - BICS (basic interpersonal communicative skills) to name just a few. By improving his declarative knowledge the NNS may well learn about language and language use even in new unfamiliar registers, yet the pragmatic gaps are too numerous and too wide for him to be able to fill all of them. But in principle for example an immigrant mother who decides to bring up her children in the language of the new country may succeed very well in learning a wholly new child culture, complete with nursery rhymes, fairy tales, etc., if she sets her mind to it. She will first acquire declarative knowledge about these new cultural aspects and may then decide to put that knowledge to use (procedural knowledge). A main distinction here is that declarative knowledge can develop rapidly and suddenly, whereas the development of procedural knowledge requires a great deal of time and practice. This is true especially of production. Thus the NNS differs from the NS particularly in his procedural knowledge: here the lack of practice, especially in exercising the productive skills in highly varied situations, becomes much more evident.

The relevance of the distinction between declarative and procedural knowledge for the difference between NSs and NNSs can, of course, be referred back to the different ways in which these groups have learnt the language. A NS has learnt his L1 by acquiring procedural knowledge: without special training he will not have a declarative knowledge of his L1, even though a few academically inclined people may at times be able to infer declarative knowledge from procedural knowledge. Even such rare analytical insight into the language will, however, be preceded by automatized procedural knowledge.

When a NS has to decide on a point of acceptability, for example, he will rely primarily on his acquired feeling for the language. If asked to give reasons for his choice he might, if he is highly educated or intellectually gifted, be able to quote or invent rules or principles of a grammatical, stylistic or textual kind, but this will take place afterwards: the basic choice has already been made in his mind before that. Also, the vague 'acceptability code' of a NS consists of elements which in individual cases are often in conflict with each other, which is one reason for the great variation in acceptability judgments. By definition the NNS, on the other hand, has learnt the language largely by being taught and by reading books, thereby acquiring considerable declarative knowledge as a basis to build upon later. He often has a very large vocabulary superseding that of many native speakers, and he knows a great deal about the language and its rules, even though some of his knowledge may be in oversimplified form, deriving primarily from pedagogical grammars. The NNS's declarative knowledge is certainly supplemented by or converted into procedural knowledge as a result of constant contact with native speakers, but this has taken place selectively and at a late stage.

The difference in the demands posed by the four skills and by the contextual variations within each skill no doubt complicate the definition of a NNS, whose (near-)nativeness will fluctuate a great deal. This difficulty appears clearly from Waller's work, where it can be seen that the same NNS may vary considerably in the degree of nativeness he achieves in his writing: one of his texts can be classed as quite native-like, while another one written in the same genre will be regarded as clearly non-native.

We might, however, operate with the concept **potential nativeness**, indicating that at times it is possible for NNSs to reach fully native-like proficiency under certain special conditions, when their pragmatic gaps can be temporarily compensated. Fully native-like competence is least difficult to achieve in reading, where effective reading strategies combined with an extensive lexical knowledge will minimize the difference from a native speaker. Full nativeness will be most difficult to achieve in speaking, where there are constant chances of getting into unwonted situations demanding a great deal of pragmatic knowledge. Also, the features of a foreign accent, though secondary from a process point of view, will be highly relevant to native speakers reflecting on whether a speaker is part of 'the monolingual club' (Sharwood Smith 1992). We may do well to remember that, as somebody has said, 'the best definition of a dog is that it is an animal that is recognized as a dog by other dogs'.

Let us now go back to the tricky definition of a NNS, comparing him on one hand with the advanced language learner, on the other with native speakers. The first point to be made is that the difference between near-native speakers and advanced learners is definitely not clear-cut. Language proficiency is a gliding scale, and wherever we decide on the cut-off point, the distinction will be artificial.

All the same, if we operate with the concept near-native proficiency we need some concrete criteria for what level it is that advanced learners do not reach and that prevents them from being regarded as near-natives. Remembering the definition of a dog, one possibility here would be informed NS opinion. A person might be regarded as a near-native if several observant and experienced NSs agree that he/she has a proficiency in speaking and/or writing that makes it difficult to distinguish him or her from natives. It would be unwise for anyone using the concept near-native not to sound out at least some NS opinions about the subjects in question. This is the method used by Coppieters 1987, who is probably the first to have investigated the concept near-nativeness on its own. (See, however, also Birdsong 1992, who provides a critical assessment of the Coppieters study.)

Whether solicitation of NS opinions is enough is, however, debatable. Comparisons to the effect that some advanced L2-users are 'better', i.e. more native-like, than others are by necessity subjective. It would therefore be advisable to supplement these opinions with at least some less subjective, quantifiable measure when distinguishing between advanced learners and near-natives. Granted that a NNS must have an extensive lexical knowledge, Meara's vocabulary test, which was used by Söderman, provides a practicable measuring instrument (see further Söderman, this volume, pp. 133 ff.). Although the cut-off point will inevitably be subjectively determined, according to Meara candidates who score more than 9200 out of 10000 in his computerized self-correcting test can be regarded as near-native. Only 14 out of Söderman's 40 possible candidates for near-nativeness, nearly all of whom were Finnish school or university teachers of English, reached this score and could thus be regarded as near-natives proper, while the remaining 26 would come under the heading 'advanced learners'.

In the light of the discussion above the definition of a near-native speaker/writer might run as follows:

A late bilingual who has a wide vocabulary comparable to that of an educated native speaker, and whose proficiency is potentially native, i.e. according to informed native-speaker opinion sufficient to maintain a fully native-like level of production for some length of time at least under certain favourable conditions. A slight foreign accent in pronunciation and intonation will be allowed.

Like most other definitions this one certainly remains vague and allows for different interpretations. But then it is also inevitable that even informed and observant native speakers will differ in their views about who and what is fully native-like.

If a number of near-native speakers from different environments meeting the criteria of the definition above could be found, future investigations could be undertaken to establish points in which these near-natives might still differ from native speakers. Some interesting lines of further research might be envisaged to further illuminate what distinguishes the NNS from the NS.

One characteristic that should be verified by linguistic analysis is the impression of the NNS's hyper-correctness. It should not be impossible to find concrete features underlying the frequent native reaction that the NNS is overly correct in his choice of vocabulary and constructions. If NNSs could also be studied in situations where they are under some strain, the differences between NS and NNS production would no doubt appear more clearly.

It has been noted that the speech of advanced learners is frequently characterized by greater wordiness than native speech. Whether this also applies to NNSs and whether greater verbosity generally can also be seen in writing could be studied by statistical analyses of corpora of NNS speech and writing. An interesting parallel could here be provided by the language of translated texts (see Chesterman H. forthcoming, Vehmas-Lehto 1990). A large corpus may also reveal restricted use of idioms and metaphoric use of language by NNSs compared with native speakers.

Altogether, how much and under what conditions the NNS's cultural and pragmatic gaps are manifested as linguistic differences in comparison with NSs provides an interesting field of reserarch. It might also furnish foreign language teachers with information on what aspects of advanced L2-proficiency are possible to teach and what aspects are better left to the learner to find out for himself. Even though there may be advantages for a highly gifted learner not to be fully native-like when using his L2 (i.e. appearing as an intelligent foreigner rather than running the risk of being branded as a stupid native), teaching should, of course, where at all feasible, aim at NS competence. Most learners will remain at a level very far from that goal, but future teachers, especially at advanced, university level, should possess near-native competence and be (made) aware of what makes them differ from native speakers.

NOTES

[1] In addition to the works mentioned, the following studies also give more than paasing reference to near-nativeness: Coulmas 1981, Christophersen 1981, esp. pp. 51 ff., Long 1990, Nickel 1985, Pawley & Syder 1983, Sharwood Smith 1992. A project at Stockholm University, e.g. Hyltenstam 1988, studied the Swedish of immigrant, 'near-native' children and adolescents, analysing its linguistic characteristics. Mauranen 1992 and 1993, Ventola & Mauranen 1990, and Lindeberg 1992 analyse the discourse of Finnish academic writing in English. Baetens Beardsmore 1991 gives a survey of the measurement and definitions of bilingualism.

REFERENCES

Baetens Beardsmore, H (1991 (1982)).	*Bilingualism: Basic Principles.* Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters.
Birdsong, D. (1992).	Ultimate Attainment in Second language Acquisition. *Language* 68: 4, 706-755.
Blum-Kulka, S. and Olshtain, E. (1986)	Too Many Words: Length of Utterance and Pragmatic Failure. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* 8:2, 165-180.
Chesterman A. (forthcoming).	Quantitative Aspects of Translation Quality. To be published in *Lebende Sprachen*.
Christophersen, P. (1981).	*Second Language Learning: Myth and Reality.* Harmondsworth: Penguin Education.
Coppieters, R. (1987).	Competence Differences between Native and Near-native Speakers. *Language* 63:3, 544-573.

Coulmas, F. (1981). Spies and Native Speakers.
In F. Coulmas (ed.) *A Festschrift for Native Speaker*, 355-366. Mouton: The Hague

Davies, A. (1991) *The Native Speaker in Applied Linguistics*.
Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh.

Færch, C. & Kasper, G. (1987) Procedural Knowledge as a Component of Foreign Language Learners' Communicative Competenceee
AILA Review 4, 7-23.

Hyltenstam, K.. (1988). Lexical Characteristics of Near-native Second Language Learning.
Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development 9, 67-84.

Koster, C. (1987). *Word Recognition in Foreign and Native Language. Effects of Context and Assimilation.*
Dordrecht: Foris Publications.

Lindeberg, A-C. (1992). Paragraph Structure in Scholarly Articles in Business Organisation and Management: A Cross-cultural Pilot Study.
Paper read at the AFinLA Conference, Tampere, November 1992.

Long, M. (1990). Maturational Constraints on Language Development.
Studies in Second Language Acquisition 12, 251-285.

Mauranen, A. (1992.) Cultural Differences in Academic Rhetoric. A Textlinguistic Study.
Ph.D. thesis, University of Birmingham

Mauranen, A. (1993). Conrtastive ESP Rhetoric: Metatext in Finnish-English Economic Texts. *English for Specific Purposes* 12, 3-22

Nickel, G. (1985). How "Native" Can (or Should) a Non-native Speaker Be? *ITL. Review of Applied Linguistics* 67-68, 141-160.

Pawley, A. & Syder, F. (1983). Two Puzzles for Linguistic Theory: Nativelike Selection and Nativelike Fluency. In J.C. Richards & R. Schmidt (eds.), *Language and Communication*. Harlow: Longman.

Reves, T. & Levine, A. (1988). The FL Receptive Skills: Same or Different? *System* 16:3, 327-336.

Ringbom, H. (1987). *The Role of First Language in Foreign Language Learning.* Clevedon, Avon: Multilingual Matters.

Sharwood Smith, M. (1992). Death of the Native Speaker. Paper given at the second EUROSLA conference, June 1992, Jyväskylä, Finland.

Vehmas-Lehto, I. (1989). *Quasi-correctness. A Critical Study of Finnish Translations of Russian Journalistic Texts.* Helsinki: Neuvostoliittoinstituutti.

Ventola, E. & Mauranen, A. (1990). *Tutkijat ja englanniksi kirjoittaminen.* (Researchers and writing in English). Helsinki: Yliopistopaino.

ISSN 1235-7227
ISBN 951-650-275-X

Åbo Akademis tryckeri
Åbo 1993

BEST COPY AVAILABLE